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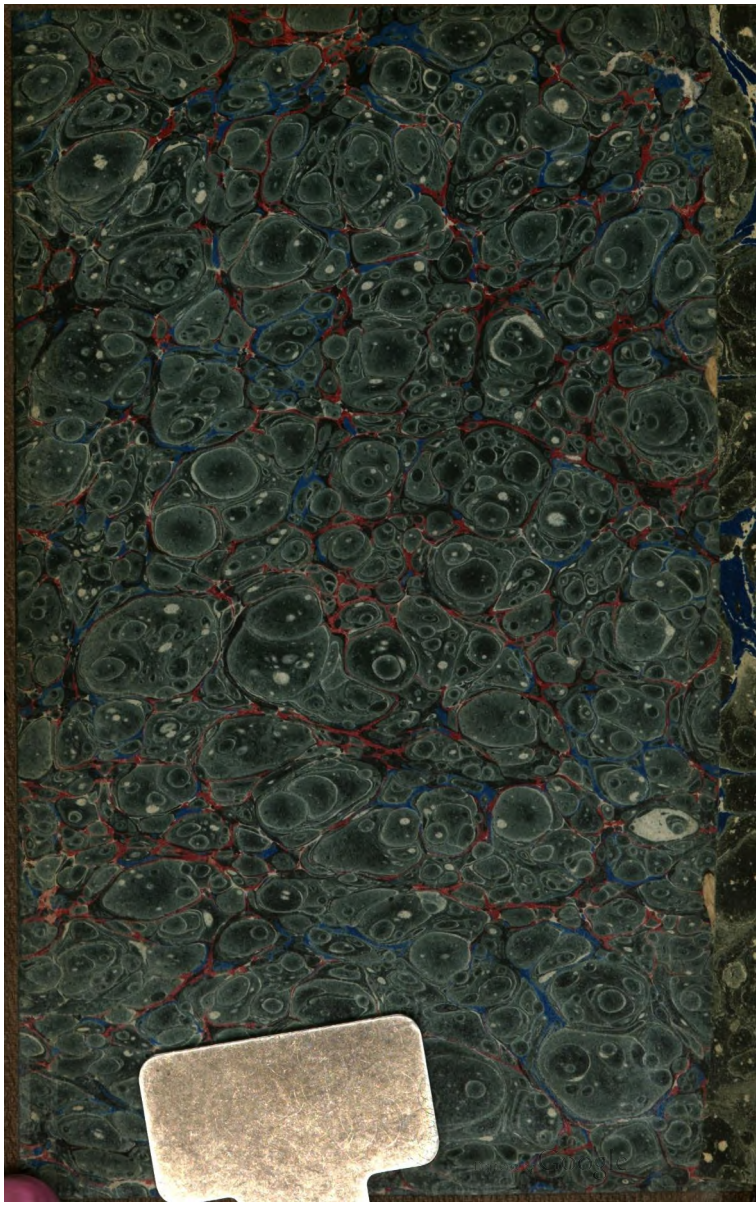
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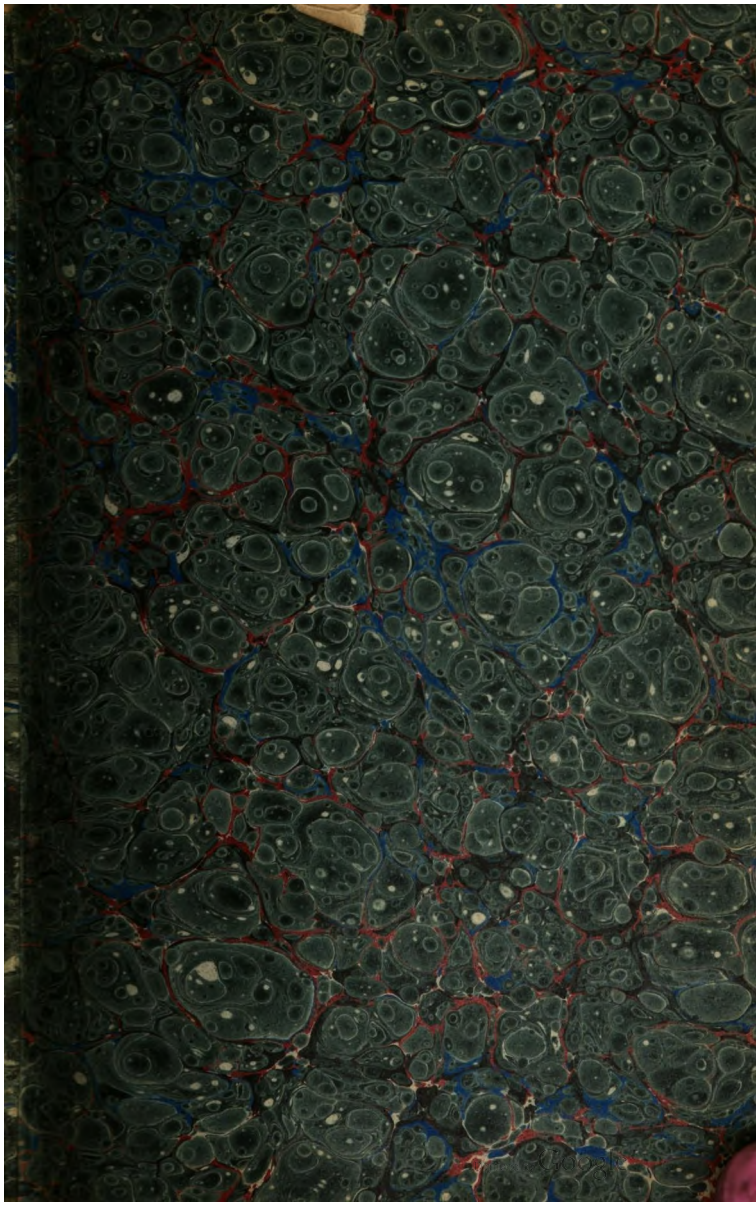
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CONVERSATIONS

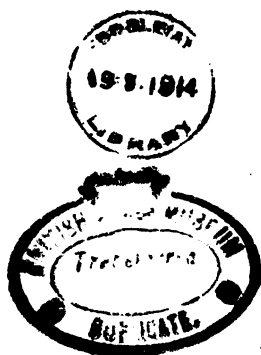
AT

CAMBRIDGE.

My eyes are filled with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirr'd;
And the same sounds are in my ears,
Which in those days I heard!—WORDSWORTH.

LONDON :
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

M.DCCC.XXXVI.



TO MY

CAMBRIDGE FRIENDS

THIS VOLUME

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH from its very nature this volume may appear somewhat fragmentary, it will be found to be animated, it is hoped, by an unity of spirit and intention. Its chief object is to inculcate the necessity of purifying the intellectual faculties, by elevating them above the sordid pursuits of the world; and to impress upon the youthful mind, in particular, the inestimable value of learning when *Christianised* by devotion and humility of temper, and sought after and beloved for itself alone. Should any reader be induced by these persuasions to cultivate an acquaintance with those neglected treasures of eloquence and erudition, which constitute the true and abiding Classics of our Literature, I shall feel myself abundantly rewarded. In advancing my own humbler sentiments in the company of men whose names will perish only with their land's language, the motive may at least

mitigate the presumption; and in attempting to preserve so much of their discourses, as various opportunities have enabled me to collect, I have only to request that all the defects may be charged upon the relater; that all the merits may be assigned to *them*.

CAMBRIDGE,
March 8th, 1836.

CONTENTS.

	Page
S. T. COLERIDGE AT TRINITY; with Specimens of his Table-Talk	1
THE REMAINS OF A LATE SIZAR OF QUEEN'S	37
KIRKE WHITE AND THE JOHNIANS; with some Account of his Last Days	47
COWLEY AND HIS FRIEND, WILLIAM HERVEY	67
THE HISTORY OF A LOST STUDENT. Taken down from his own Lips	88
A GARLAND FOR A WHITE FOREHEAD	106
SIDNEY WALKER AND JOHN MOULTRIE	110
THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY; with Records of the Union	130
EDWARD LYTTON BULWER AND T. M.	145
GRAY AND MASON. A Summer Day with the Muses .	160
THE DESTRUCTIVES IN 1643. HENRY MORE AND JOSEPH BEAUMONT	219
THE POET WORDSWORTH AND PROFESSOR SMYTHE	235
ONE HOUR WITH HENRY MARTYN, and a Glance at the present State of Religious Feeling in the Uni- versity	253
PRAED AND HIS CHANSONS	263
A WORD WITH PROFESSOR SEDGWICK, on the Studies of the University	270
NOTES	290

S. T. COLERIDGE AT TRINITY,

WITH

SPECIMENS OF HIS *TABLE-TALK*.

Mr. Coleridge visited Cambridge upon occasion of the Scientific Meeting there, in June, 1833. "My emotions at visiting the university," he said, "were at first overwhelming. I could not speak for an hour; yet my feelings were upon the whole very pleasurable, and I have not passed, of late years at least, three days of such great enjoyment and healthful excitement of mind and body."—*Note to the Table-Talk.*

Thou who rewardest but with popular breath,
And that, too, after death.—COWLEY.

HE is gone from amongst us! After a painful and dreary voyage, though cheered by one STAR, which no tempest can overcloud, the ANCIENT MARINER hath reached the haven where he would be. He is gone from amongst us! but never let it be said, that the place thereof knows him no more. The old man, eloquent still, haunts the courts of "dear, dear Jesus;" his rooms are still to be seen by the gateway of the College, and to many a youthful heart in those academic bowers will long be consecrated by his virtue, his piety, and his learning.

To one, who, like myself, has been an attentive observer of our literature during the last thirty years, the history of Coleridge offers no flattering testimony of popular taste. Throughout a life which, if intellectually considered, was certainly characterized by unwearied diligence and activity, he was, in the common sense of the term, an unsuccessful author, as he pleasantly observed, better known to his bookseller than to the public. The eloquence of his prose, the music of his poetry, fell equally unheeded on the national ear. The humblest hurdy-gurdy that ever called forth an execration, obtained a more generous reward than the dulcimer of "the Abyssinian Maid." A change seems now gradually coming over the spirit of the dream. His poems are selling, the crumbs are gathered from his table, and an edition of his *Remains* announced to be in preparation, under the superintendence of one whose taste can discover their beauties, and whose eloquence can defend them.

But I am wandering from Coleridge's visit to Cambridge,—and who that was present will ever forget that evening, under the clock at Trinity*, which witnessed a symposium from which Plato himself might have carried something away? The remembrance even now creeps over the mind like a Summer Night's Dream.

* Mr. Thirlwall's Rooms.

While lingering the other day over the recently published specimens of Coleridge's *Table-Talk*, it occurred to me, that I might also be able to contribute something to that heap of treasure, though the fragments would be far less pure and precious. They only who have been in the society of the poet, can make adequate allowances for the deficiencies of his reporter. Of all the eminent men with whom it has been my fortune to be associated, his conversations were the most difficult to preserve. You went away with a few links, and thought you had the chain. Conversations, indeed, become a misnomer when applied to Coleridge. They were rather a series of monologues; episodes delivered before an audience. Yet, who would wish to 'punctuate,' by a single question, that rich and musical discourse, or interrupt the stream of variegated thoughts which flowed from that Mouth of Gold? What appeared to the common or inattentive listener to be tedious and useless digressions, were, in reality, only so many winding steps to the wide and comprehensive view of the subject; and who, that has climbed with this venerable guide to the summit of his lofty arguments, ever regretted the weariness of the ascent, or did not think the labour amply repaid by the glorious prospect spread out before him?

Boswell would have found his occupation gone at

Highgate. The genius of Coleridge very rarely broke out in those flashes of poignant satire and eloquence, that taught men to tremble before the Lion of Bolt-court. It is true of a sentence, as of a serpent,—the shorter it is the sharper its sting. Coleridge, from the poetical and peculiar turn of his mind, was accustomed to run into prolixity, and hence his argument often grew weak at the point. For this reason I never regarded him, notwithstanding his skill in logic, as a successful disputant; he fought well at a distance, but seemed to shrink from close combat, and to think more of the splendour of his weapons than of their temper. He would have stood little chance with Warburton's club.

The poet's editor and kinsman has met this objection with great spirit, in his affectionate preface; and, in fact, it only amounts to saying,—that Coleridge was not Johnson. He was equally admirable, in a different manner. There is nothing in Boswell finer than the comparison of Kean's unequal acting to reading Shakspeare by flashes of lightning. It is a magnificent simile.

The following specimens were written down while the voice of the poet was ringing in my ears; and some snatches of the original melody are therefore, I hope, retained in the transcription.

MILTON, NEWTON, AND HALE.

How the heart opens at the magic name of Milton! yet who shall, in our day, hang another garland upon his tomb? Eloquence has exhausted its treasures in his praise, and men of genius have rivalled each other in the splendour of their offerings at the shrine of the Bard. He has long ago taken his seat with Homer and with Shakspeare, one of the Poets of the World.

It belongs only to the noblest intellect thus to identify itself with all nations, and to find countrymen wherever the spirit of humanity dwells. Into the remotest seclusion of the civilized world, the voice of the "old man eloquent" has penetrated. Even the lone Icelander, placed

Far amid the melancholy main,

has listened in his own tongue to the Story of Paradise. As a poet, his genius was universal. He has left us models of excellence in every branch of his art. In the sublime epic, the noble drama, the picturesque mask, the graceful elegy, the vigorous sonnet,—in all he is equally great, equally beyond the reach of rivalry. His genius ripened with his years; and every poem he wrote was a step of purer gold to his Temple of Fame. His element was sublimity,—but he possessed, in an

eminent degree, the opposite qualities of tenderness and grace. He who, with the power of heroic song, could stir the soul, as with the sound of a trumpet, knew also the "tender stops" of the pastoral flute; and the same hand that armed the rebellious legions, and built up the radiant domes of Pandemonium, mingled also the cup of enchantment in *Comus*, and strewed the flowers on the hearse of Lycidas.

But to Milton, far higher praise is due than mere genius, however mighty, can demand. He has brought the Muse to the aid of piety, and confuted, in every line of his noble epics, the assertion of Gibbon, that his powers were "cramped by the system of our Religion, and never appeared to so great advantage as when he shook it a little off." We may well glory, that

. Piety has found
Friends in the friends of science, and true prayer
Has flowed from lips wet with Castalian dews.

The Task.

We can recall with delight, that "child-like Sage*," who baptized philosophy in the Fountains of Peace, and that Judge†, who waited in humble hope for the summons to a higher tribunal, and that illustrious Bard

. . . . Whose genius had angelic wings,
And fed on manna.

‡

* Newton.

† Hale.

BLACKMORE AND NAT. LEE.

It may be assumed, as a critical axiom, that no man who, during his life-time has obtained a very large share of applause, is deserving of total oblivion. This is emphatically true of Cowley, of Herbert, of Crashaw, and even of Blackmore, who though, in general, writing quite bad enough for a physician, has, in one or two places, in defiance, as it were, of his nature, risen into true poetry. You will see my meaning in the description of Satan's journey :—

. From afar

I did with wondrous joy descry at last
Some streaks of light which darted on the waste,
Pale beams that on the face of chaos lay;
Mounting this way, I reached the lightsome sky,
And saw the beauteous world before me lie.

∴ The fresh creation looked all charming, mild,
And all the flowery face of Nature smiled.
What odours, such as heavenly zephyrs blow,
From the sweet mouth of the infant world did flow!

So again, we perceive a very uncommon ingenuity and beauty in the application of the legendary invasion of heaven by the giants, to the fervent and unceasing prayers of penitence, which are called,—

. The only giants that assail
The throne of heaven, and in the end prevail.

How charming is this metaphor of the unhappy Lee; a name not to be mentioned without calling the tears to our eyes,—

. . . . Speech is morning to the mind;
It spreads the beauteous images abroad,
Which else lie furled and clouded in the soul.

Duke of Guise.

MILTON AND DR. BAINBRIDGE.

It seems to me that a very probable explanation of Milton's disagreement with the master of his college, is contained in the following passage from the 'Apology for Smectymnus'. It alludes, you perceive, to some of those academic performances which were not at that time thought unbecoming the gravity of a university. "There, while they acted and overacted, among other scholars I was a spectator; they thought themselves gallant men, and I thought them fools; they made sport, and I laughed; they mispronounced, and I disliked; and to make up the Atticism, *they were out, and I hissed.*" It is not the least singular circumstance connected with this passage, (which has *not*, I think, been quoted by any of the poet's biographers,) that it is almost a translation from Demosthenes' celebrated oration, *De Corona*.

HENRY SMYTH, THE SILVER-TONGUED PREACHER.

IF the critical canon be adopted which defines eloquence to consist in a continuous flow of clear and beautiful thoughts, in harmonious and carefully arranged language, the divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, would, perhaps, be deemed inferior to their successors. They very rarely present us with a perfect whole. Their compositions are marked by the liveliest *expression*, but are often destitute of *symmetry*. Their power comes out in vivid bursts of sublimity, in flashes of indignant satire, in exhortations of overpowering enthusiasm. You will observe, also, a dramatic spirit and liveliness of painting. Their sermons abound in, what we may call, effective situations. For examples of all these qualities, I would send you to the works of a writer who flourished in the Elizabethan reign; and who, for his eloquence, obtained the appellation of *the silver-tongued preacher*. Two or three passages occur to me, which seem to be worthy of the highest reputation. The first is taken from a sermon, bearing the singular title of *The Trumpet of the Soul sounding to Judgment*; and refers to the few brief years in which wickedness is permitted to triumph—"When INIQUITY hath played her part,

VENGEANCE leaps upon the stage. The black guard shall attend upon you, you shall eat at the table of Sorrow, and the crown of Death shall be upon your heads, and many glittering faces shall be looking upon you." He has here dashed out with a few strokes of his pen, a picture of almost Miltonic grandeur. The next is of a different character:—"When God seeth an hypocrite, he will pull his vizard from his face, as Adam was stript of his fig-leaves, and show the anatomy of his heart, as though his life were written in his forehead." Who has expressed the weakness of the flesh in stronger terms than these:—"The kingdom of heaven is caught by violence; so soon as we rise in the morning, we go forth to fight with two mighty giants, the World and the Devil, *and whom do we take with us but a traitor*?*"

PLATO.

It has been well said, that if Plato had attempted to enforce the laws of his proposed republic, he must have begun by banishing himself. Deeply was his mind imbued with the elements of the truest poetry; and no one delighted more in the

* See Smyth's *Sermons*, 1593.

scenes of nature, the shadow of the trees, or the soothing murmur of the fountain. And here I may notice, what I think has not always been sufficiently admired, the peculiar beauty and transparency of his language. His imagination is as clear as it is deep; you see every particle of gold at the bottom. Nor let this be accounted a slight advantage; for I am acquainted with no Greek writer to whom the same charm belongs.

LOGIC OR GEOMETRY NECESSARY FOR A POET.

LOGIC, for every general purpose, is, in my opinion, infinitely more useful than geometry, and furnishes a more healthful regimen for the mind; and I say this without in any way undervaluing the importance of mathematics; for I, too, have—

. . . Mused on Granta's willowy strand,
The sage of Alexandria in my hand,
And marked his mystic symbols; the severe
And cogent truths dwell in my reason's ear*.

Nor have I forgotten the words of that illustrious man, by whom SCIENCE was married to POETRY, and in whose writings she always appears in the

* *Pursuits of Literature.*

company of the Graces. Need I mention Lord Bacon? "If the wit be too dull," said he, "they sharpen it; if too wandering, they fix it; if too inherent in the sense, they abstract it." This great principle ought to be kept constantly in sight. Geometry is a means to an end—a series of steps to a temple; many, I fear, there are who never get beyond the steps. The admirable Fuller, of whom Queen's ought to be almost as proud as of Erasmus, has placed the matter in a very clear and proper light, in his character of a learned and accomplished person. "Mathematics," he says, "he moderately studieth to his great contentment, using it as ballast for his soul; yet to fix it, not to stall it, nor suffers it to be so unmannerly as to jostle out other arts." A mere mathematician, made up of unknown quantities, is a dreary and melancholy spectacle—a tree without leaves.

I am aware that poets, and persons in whom the imaginative faculties are very fully developed, often regard the severer sciences as unconnected with their pursuits. I have known more than one young and ardent writer of this description, to whom my advice has always been couched in the words of a writer competent to speak:—*Season your studies with more hard and knotty inquiries; and let the mind be daily employed upon some subjects from which it is averse.* Such aids, if they do not im-

prove the blossom of the budding tree, will prop and strengthen the stem: at least half the mental deformity abounding in the world is caused by the want of such a support. For let it be remembered, that after the tree has attained a certain growth, its position cannot be altered;—it is crooked for life. Nothing can be more absurd than this belief of the necessary opposition of poetry to science. In all great poets the reverse is manifest. You see it in Homer, in Dante, and, above all, in Milton. Perhaps I ought rather to say, that you *feel* its influence, in shaping the conceptions of the poet, and preserving those fine proportions whose combination makes the harmony of a structure. What can be more ridiculous than the poetical architecture in fashion among the moderns? A magnificent portal leads to a mud hovel; you ascend a marble staircase, and arrive at—a garret.

Poetry is, I think, the only art which is thought to require no preparatory education. Chaucer, somewhere, very happily calls it a Rock of Ice; and the only safe mode of climbing it, is by cutting our steps carefully as we advance. We may thus, with patience, labour, and a strong heart, reach the top at last. A rash and foolish attempt to scale it at a run, will inevitably terminate in overthrow and disgrace. A rhymers in our day thinks less of Parnassus than a Swiss peasant of his mountains,

for he does carry a staff with him. To return, for a moment, to my original argument. It will be understood that I attribute very little efficacy to the demonstration of a proposition *per se*; but to the devotion and absorption of mind which the operation requires; not so much to the actual showing, upon paper, that "Solid Parallelopipeds, which have the same altitude, are to one another as their bases," as the few minutes required to prove it. If the mind wanders, the steps must be retraced: thus by perseverance we acquire the power of keeping the mental eye fixed, without wavering, upon any object; an acquisition, by the way, of infinite importance.

A DISTINCTION.

YET the qualities we have been condemning in — are not so much positive vices, as what we may call, with Butler, virtues, degenerated and grown wild for want of culture. You discover the beauty of the flower even in the weed.

LANGHORNE AND DONNE.

I THINK you will find the original of Langhorne's celebrated line—

The child of misery baptized in tears,
in Donne's Sermon on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. The prose works of this admirable Divine, are Armouries for the Christian Soldier. Such a depth of intellect, such a nervousness of style, such a variety of illustration, such a power of argument, are to be looked for only in the writings of that race of Giants. Donne's poetry must be sought in his prose; yet some of his verses breathe an uncommon fervency of spirit, and when he looked in his heart and wrote, his manner is delightful. The following poem, for sweetness and tenderness of expression, chastened by a religious thoughtfulness and faith, is, I think, almost perfect. It is, you see, the address of a lover, or friend, to one whom he leaves behind;—mark the exquisite allusion in the conclusion of the second and fourth stanzas:

Sweetest love, I do not go
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me;

But since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best
Thus to use myself in jest,
By feigned death to die.

Yesternight the Sun went hence,
And yet is here to-day ;
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way :
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Hastier journies, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

O! how feeble is man's power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall !
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
Itself on us t' advance.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill :
Destiny may take thy part,
And may thy fears fulfil ;
But think that we
Are but laid aside to sleep ;
They who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be.

HERODOTUS AND THUCYDIDES.

THE style of Herodotus is full of sweetness, and shines with a mild and pellucid lustre; but the stream is shallow, and you may dive a hundred times without bringing up a single pearl. No author of equal reputation was ever so deficient in beauty of sentiment, or weight and dignity of reflection. But he possesses the art of story-telling, he is an admirable *raconteur*. He abounds also in splendid and animating shows, and there is undoubtedly something very striking and impressive in the long array and picturesque pomp of his history. His merits, indeed, seem to be essentially poetical; and there is force in Mr. Thirlwall's remark *, that in the unity of his subject, Herodotus resembles the epic poets; so much so, indeed, that he may be supposed to have formed his plan from the Homeric writings.

The unity of the *Iliad* and the *History* you will observe, consists in the predominance of one great thought: in the one, Achilles; in the other, the Persian power. You do not find this unity in

* Alluding to a previous observation of Mr. Thirlwall, who had been speaking of Herodotus.

Thucydides, a writer in whom I see realized the saying of Mirabeau, "that words are things." But his power is not the result of melo-dramatic art. He is, indeed, vehement, but then it is the vehemence of truth; his diction copious, yet well chosen; his thoughts impetuous, yet always advancing in close order. Read his famous description of the Pestilence at Athens: the author is swallowed up in his subject,—the painter chained before his own picture.

BOLINGBROKE AND HIS PHILOSOPHY.

I KNOW too well the danger and injustice of hastily judging any eminent individual. The faintest breath clouds the glass through which we contemplate their actions. There is a proposition in Newton's *Optics* which has always appeared to me very happily illustrative of this subject. "If the eye-glass be tinted faintly with the smoke of a lamp or torch to obscure the light of the star, the fainter light in the circumference of the star ceases to be visible, and the star (if the glass be sufficiently soiled with smoke,) appears something more like a mathematical point." It loses, in fact, to our eye, that particular character which by nature belongs to it. So it is with the conduct of those

great men who have played the first part on the world's stage. God knows, smoke is never wanting to obscure the light of the noblest actions : of Bolingbroke's political character, therefore, I will say nothing, but of his literary pretensions, I should be rejoiced to see a fair and liberal estimate. His philosophical writings have been characterized by Warburton with great severity, as containing the rankness of South, without his force, and the malignity of Marvell, without his wit. For the erection of his own system, he thought it necessary to ridicule or demolish every other. Not satisfied with occupying a vacant spot, of which several are to be found in philosophy and metaphysics, he set about clearing the whole region. His hand is against every man. The wise and thoughtful Cudworth becomes only a nonsensical paraphraser of nonsense ; Wollaston is fit for an asylum ; Clarke is a presumptuous rhapsodist ; the venerable Sherlock is beaten down with a sneer. Yet he himself was, after all, the victim of what he calls the delirium of metaphysical theology. I should like to see the valuable parts of his works threshed out from the chaff that covers them ; for, with all his errors and imperfections, Bolingbroke was an extraordinary individual : the influence he attained over the most celebrated of his contemporaries, proves *that*. "I really think," said Pope, "there is some-

thing in that great man which looks as if he was placed here by mistake." To me, the philosopher never appears in so attractive an attitude as when leaning in tears over the chair of the suffering poet*.

A HINT FROM THE CHARACTERISTICS.

LORD SHAFTESBURY calls the Rules of Art the Philosophical Sea Cards, by which the adventurous Intellects of the age are wont to steer.

JEREMY TAYLOR, THE SPENSER OF PROSE.

AND why should I not call Taylor a poet? Is not *The Holy Living and Dying*, a sacred and didactic poem, in almost as wide a sense of the word as the *Commedia* of Dante? What Bard of ancient or modern times has surpassed, in richness of language, in fertility of fancy, in majesty of sentiment, in grace of imagery, this Spenser of English prose?

To Taylor belonged the "believing mind" of Collins. With the romance of the early chroniclers he was deeply imbued. The spirit of discovery had then made little progress; and the knowledge actually acquired only served to kindle the darkness

* See Spence's *Anecdotes*.

into a faint and uncertain twilight that magnified every object. In the "Lion-haunted Inland" was still supposed to lie

A mystic city, goal of high emprise.—CHAPMAN.

And its golden towers often flashed through the waking dreams of the poetical enthusiast. Nor think me too ardent in my admiration of this glory of our Church.

Only take one or two specimens from the best known of his works, and say in what they are inferior to the sublimest poetry. The following is a picture:—

"All the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness; the thousand thousand accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look how the old sexton, Time, throws up the earth and digs a grave, where we must lay our sins or our sorrows, and sow our bodies till they rise again in a fair or an intolerable eternity."

The next might have been copied from the notebook of Spenser. The "full eyes of childhood" is one of the finest images in the language.

"Reckon but from the spritefulness of youth, and the fair cheeks and full eyes of childhood, to the loathsomeness and horror of a three days'

burial. For so have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood; at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head, and broke the stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces."

What pen has uttered sweeter things on children, or the delights of the domestic hearth. His sermon on the Marriage-Ring is more beautiful than any pastoral.

"No man can tell but he that loves his children, how many delicious accents make a man's heart to dance in the pretty conversation of those dear pledges;—their childishness,—their stammering,—their little angers,—their innocence,—their imperfections,—their necessities,—are so many little emanations of joy and comfort to him that delights in their persons and society."

He looked out upon nature with the eye and heart of a poet, and in the following passage seems to have anticipated Thomson in one of the most beautiful stanzas of the *Castle of Indolence*.

"I am fallen into the hands of publicans and

sequestrators, and they have taken all from me. What now? Let me look about me. They have left me sun, and moon, and fire, and water; a loving wife, and many friends to pity me, and some to relieve; and I can still discourse, and unless I list, they have not taken away my merry countenance, and my cheerful spirit, and a good conscience; they have still left me the providence of God, and all the promises of the Gospel, and my religion, and my hopes of heaven, and my charity to them too; and still I sleep, and digest, and eat, and drink; I read and meditate; I can walk in my neighbours' pleasant fields, and see the varieties of natural beauties, and delight in all that in which God delights; that is, in virtue and wisdom, in the whole creation, and in God himself."

Thomson has all the fervour of the poet, without the chastened submission of the Christian:—

I care not, Fortune, what you me deny;

You cannot rob me of free nature's grace,

You cannot shut the windows of the sky,

Through which Aurora shows her brightening face.

You cannot bar my constant feet to trace

The woods and lawns, by living streams, at eve;

Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,

And I their toys to the great children leave:

Of fancy, reason, virtue,—nought can me bereave.

How pleasant would it be to go on thus, if my

memory would enable me, gathering choice specimens of his sublimity, pathos, and picturesque truth; collecting the precious stones of which his charms are strung; for even his ornaments are never chosen for their lustre alone; and in the most gorgeous festivals and riotous enjoyments of his imagination, a Hand is perceived writing on the wall. His learning and fancy are only the handmaids and attendants of his piety; and those precious essences which he extracts from the Tree of Knowledge, are all poured over the feet of his Divine Master.

It is only when he shackles his fancy with rhyme, that his vein of poetry ceases to flow. He is a poet everywhere except in verse. Yet how acutely sensitive was his ear to all sweet sounds. Not even Milton, in the bright and happy days of his youth, when he wrote *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, breathed a more passionate love of the pealing organ, or more deeply lamented the "drowsy dullness in devotion," brought in by the Puritans, or prayed with greater ardour for the "solemn melody and the raptures of warbling sweet voices out of cathedral choirs," which Taylor said were wont to raise the spirit, and as it were, carry it up into heaven*.

* I am surprised to find this opinion discountenanced by Bishop Heber, who observes in his *Life of Taylor*, "that while from many passages of his writings he appears to have been

The inferiority of his verses may, indeed, have resulted from want of practice and study; for, even in the noblest works of the Muse, much of the credit is due to the ingenuity and skill of the architect. His poems are few, but I remember one or two passages which appear to possess considerable merit.

That bright eternity
Where the Great King's transparent throne
Is of an entire jasper-stone ;
There the eye
O' the chrysolite,
And a sky
Of diamonds, rubies, chrysophrase,
And above all, Thy holy face,
Make an eternal clarity :
When Thou thy jewels dost bind up, that day
Remember us, we pray,
That where the beryl lies,
And the crystal 'bove the skies,
There Thou may'st appoint us place
Within the brightness of Thy face.
And our soul
In the scroll
Of life and blissfulness enrol,
That we may praise Thee to eternity.

fond of chanting and psalmody, it may, nevertheless, be suspected, that he had no ear for music. It is singular," he adds, "to compare the reluctant permission which he gives to the use of organs in churches, with the glow of feeling which their majestic tones excited in the breast of Milton."

Full of mercy, full of love,
Look upon us from above,
Thou who taught'st the blind man's night
To entertain a double light,
Thine and the day's (and that thine too).
The lame away his crutches threw ;
The parched crust of leprosy
Returned into its infancy.
The dumb amazed was to hear
His own unchain'd tongue strike his ear.
O let thy love our pattern be,—
Let thy mercy teach one brother
To forgive and love another,
That copying thy mercy here,
Thy goodness may hereafter rear
Our souls into thy glory, when
Our dust shall cease to be with men.

It is very astonishing, that among the eighteen prose authors, whom Pope selected as authorities for an English Dictionary, the name of Taylor is not found. Forgotten it could not be, for we are expressly told by Spence, that the "list was talked over several times, and quite settled." Sir Walter Raleigh, it is said, was rejected twice, as being too affected. Had the poet ever perused the concluding chapter of the History of the World? For the omission of Taylor I can assign no reason. Certainly from no other writer could be gathered such stores of dignified and impressive words.

No path of ancient or modern learning, however sequestered or untrodden, was unknown to him. His memory brought up treasures from the hidden deep; and never did a soldier of the Holy Cross issue forth in a more gorgeous equipment to fight for the Sepulchre of Christ. But the resplendent sword was of celestial temper, and that costly armour was mighty against the dart of the enemy as any coat of iron mail;—it protected while it shone*.

PULPIT ELOQUENCE.—NORRIS OF BEMERTON.

IN the pulpit, as in the economy of private life, I consider gentleness and persuasion more efficacious than their contraries. For this reason I think the Sermons of Norris, upon the Beatitudes of our Saviour, models of exhortations to a village congregation. A minister should try to make his hearers in love with the Gospel. I have never known much good done by those who preach with the sword in their hand.

* Fuller.

A MERE LINGUIST.

I NEVER regarded the character of a mere linguist with any admiration. Butler has hit it off with great spirit. He that has many languages to express his thoughts, and none worth expressing, he compares to one that can write all hands, but never the better sense; or can cast any sum of money, but has none.

BIOGRAPHY.—SOUTHEY.

CLEARNESS and simplicity of manner, diligence and impartiality in the collection and statement of facts, constitute the great and distinguishing merits of a biographer. Some histories are nothing but triumphal processions, where the author leads the way, scattering flowers. These are not lives, but panegyrics. To prove this proposition by its converse, look at Southey. How delightful it is to read his poetical criticisms; and what a loss has literature sustained in his once promised History of English Poetry. It would, indeed, have been a *κρημα εις αση*. With more than Warton's learning, he possesses an eloquence and refinement of imagination to which that amiable writer has no preten-

sions. His style, like some noble river, glides softly on at "its own sweet will,"—deep and clear. His fancy, always warms and cheers without oppressing. His biographical sketches have the felicity and freedom of Goldsmith; they are tombs cut in crystal.

SPENSER AND THE FAËRIE QUEEN.

I HAVE never been able to understand what people mean by the tediousness of the *Faërie Queen*; for, to me, those winding and protracted paths always seem, to borrow a phrase from Davenant's Preface to *Gondibert*, as pleasant as a Summer passage on a crooked river, where going about and turning back is as delightful as the delays of parting lovers. There is, moreover, a peculiar and delicious charm even in the occasional dimness and obscurity of his pictures. The rich and solemn strain of his Muse still enchants the ear, though her features only glimmer faintly upon the eye. It is like the beloved one singing to you in the twilight. Pope makes a distinction between softness and sweetness of versification; placing one in Ovid and Dryden, the other in Virgil and Waller,—but you find both in Spenser.

TITHES, WITH AN ILLUSTRATION FROM
BURTON.

My anger and disgust at the malevolent and disgraceful attacks levelled daily against the Church are absolutely without bounds. I am weary of looking out and crying, *Watchman, what of the night?* In reading the *Anatomy of Melancholy* the other morning, I was amused at the wrath which calumnies of a similar character had kindled in the breast of the learned scholar of Christchurch. The passage is worth quoting. He is inveighing against the ignorance of these malevolent antagonists, and he continues, “But though they should read, it would be to small purpose,—*clames, licet, et mare cælo confundas*; thunder, lighten, preach hell and damnation, tell them ’tis a sin, they will not believe it: denounce and terrify; they have cauterized consciences; they do not attend; as the enchanted adder, they stop their ears: call them base, irreligious, profane, barbarous, Pagans, Atheists, epicures (as some of them surely are), they cry, *Euge! optime**; and applaud themselves with that *miser, simul ac nummos contemplor in arca*: say what you will, as a dog barks at the moon, to no

* *Ayre Rectified*, Pt. ii., Sec. 2.

purpose are your sayings; take your heaven, let them have money,—a base, profane, epicurean, hypocritical rout. For my part, let them pretend what they will, counterfeit religion, blear the world's eyes, bombast themselves, and stuff out their greatness with church spoils, shine like so many peacocks,—so cold is my charity, so defective in their behalf, that I shall never think better of them, than that they are rotten at core, their bones are full of epicurean hypocrisy and atheistical marrow.”

Does not this smack of what Cowper called the Diabolical Dictionary. One fancies that when the author broke into so violent an invective, he must have forgotten to sweeten his rooms with juniper, which he says was in great request at Oxford for that purpose. Let me say a word in praise of this admirable book, which could draw Johnson from his bed two hours before he was willing to rise. The quaintness of his style, sometimes rising into strains of wonderful dignity and eloquence,—the fertility of his invention, the extent of his learning, the multitude of his illustrations,—all contribute to render the *Anatomy of Melancholy* one of the most entertaining books in the language. The independence of his character, I confess, offers an additional attraction to me.

GRECIAN LOVE-POETRY.

APOLLONIUS RHODIUS, ANACREON; BEAUMONT AND
FLETCHER.

A DELICIOUS paper might be written on Grecian Love-poetry. Not to speak of the Homeric Remains, the works of Apollonius Rhodius, Theocritus, and above all, the *Anthology*, would furnish exquisite specimens. The sixth Idyll of Theocritus contains some touches of tenderness equal to anything in the *Faithful Shepherdess*. The lover showing his mistress where the sweetest hyacinths were to be gathered, and the invitation to his cavern are of this number. Whence comes it that Apollonius is so little read, even by scholars? He seems to me the only poet of ancient times who studied the Picturesque, or who (supposing an adequate acquaintance with the language and manners,) would have admired the *Fairy Queen*. I have said nothing of Anacreon, for he is known and admired by all. His joyousness of heart, his festivity of fancy, his grace and richness of expression, glow with an oriental fervour. His garments breathe of myrrh, as if he had been made glad in ivory palaces. He has no unmeaning expletives to swell out a halting line. Every word, like the

flowers of an Eastern love-letter, is a symbol of some tender and romantic sentiment. You will meet with much of this picturesque beauty in those "dainty devices," which abounded in the early part of the seventeenth century. Shakspeare, too, who combined the highest strains of the Muse with the humblest, enjoyed this delightful vein. But the most charming passage with which my memory furnishes me, occurs in the *Noble Kinsmen*, of Beaumont and Fletcher. The lover is indulging in one of those bursts of enthusiasm to which lovers in all ages have been prone.

. Blessed garden,
 And fruit and flowers more blessed; that still blossom
 As her bright eyes shine on ye! would I were,
 For all the fortune of my life hereafter,
Yon little tree, yon blooming Apricot,
How I would spread, and fling my wanton arms
In at her window. I would bring her fruit,
 Fit for the gods to feed on. Youth and pleasure,
 Still as she tasted, should be doubled on her.

LITERATURE AS A PROFESSION.

WHAT a fearful insanity, and alas! becoming every day, I fear, more general, is this devotion of the mind to literature as a *profession*. It is a species of suicide—a throwing oneself upon the

very spear of Fortune. Burton said of poets, more than two hundred years ago, "that they are like the grasshoppers; sing they must in the Summer, and pine in the Winter." He might have added, that many never know a Summer at all. Poverty and suffering are the parents of adulation. Read Dryden's Dedications, and understand how quickly this pernicious habit becomes natural; how soon the poison is absorbed into the moral circulation: of that depravity, or weakness of mind, which induces a writer to honour vice and "daub iniquity," contempt too unmitigated cannot be expressed—yet who can refrain from pity at the spectacle of Genius bartering its birth-right for a mess of pottage; like the untutored Indian, who exchanges a bar of gold for a cracked looking-glass.*

WORTHIES OF TRINITY.

SIDNEY, AND HIS FRIEND BROOKE; NEWTON, ETC.

SURELY, if the *Religio Loci* dwell anywhere, it must be within these courts, every spot of which is hallowed by the feet of Piety and Genius. While passing under the gateway, the form of Newton seemed to rise before me, and I turned round to

* See this subject treated at greater length in the *Biographia Literaria*.

look at that window where he so often stood, decomposing the rays of morning. There was something inexpressibly delightful in the fancy. Nor was he absent from my mind, whose life has been so happily described, as poetry put into action. I mean Sir Philip Sidney, who, although he was entered of Christ Church, appears, according to the fashion of the age, to have studied also in this College. Never has one individual united so many suffrages in his favour; never have the Graces bound so many garlands on any other grave. Alike honoured and beloved by statesman and by poet; the contemporary of Shakspeare; the patron and friend of Spenser. It was happily said, in allusion to his political sagacity, that he started into manhood without passing through youth. Spenser, in some very touching and affectionate verses, has recorded—the gentle benignity of his countenance—those lineaments of gospel-books—which formed the correct index of his temper. Nature had showered her blessings upon him. His voice was so sweet and agreeable, that by one of his contemporaries he is styled, nectar-tongued Sidney. Can we be surprised at the enthusiastic admiration of his friends? His tutor at Oxford wished it to be written upon his grave that he had been the instructor of Sir Philip Sidney; and Lord Brooke thought his highest claim to future distinction con-

sisted, not in having been the servant of Elizabeth, or the councillor of James, but the bosom friend of the author of the *Arcadia*. Of such a man we are not to judge by those productions which opportunity allowed him to bring forth. He never, we are told by one most competent to speak, wrote anything for fame; his chief object was to improve the life of himself and others. But he did not labour without his reward. His apology for poetry appeared at a most dark and inauspicious season; yet that stream of sweetly-uttered knowledge, to employ his own words, did not flow in vain; those high-erected thoughts found echoes in other hearts. Of the dignified and Christian strain of his eloquence, you have only to open his *Defence* to be convinced. The harp of Sion has never been lauded in a more glowing or beautiful eulogium.

The highest compliment I can bestow upon the poetry of his friend, Lord Brooke, is, that it has obtained the praise of Southey. Their history has the romance of poetry. They were born, I think, in the same year, educated at the same school, and grew up together in the most affectionate intercourse. Tradition still points out the terrace near Sir Fulke's seat in Warwickshire, where the friends were wont to take their morning walks.

THE
REMAINS OF A LATE SIZAR OF QUEEN'S.

Lighted by that dim torch our sorrow bears,
We sadly trace thy coffin with our tears—HENRY KING.

THE Author of the following verses is equally beyond the reach of praise or of censure; he is deaf to the voice of the charmer, charm she never so wisely. Death, that constant and tender friend of the forsaken, has at length rocked the sufferer asleep upon his cold pillow. Yet it would have poured some consolation into his wounded and bruised spirit, to have known, that the harp-string to which he had intrusted his name, should win some hearts to its music; that his memory should survive in a few pure and affectionate bosoms.

The following poems, with many others, were the amusement of his leisure hours. What he might have accomplished under a kinder fortune, and in a happier condition of mind, it will not benefit him to inquire; but it cheered him to reflect, when all worldly hopes had faded from his heart, that he had written no line which, for its moral tendency, he would “wish to blot.” At that awful hour, he felt this assurance to be better than fame.

TO A CHILD IN PRAYER.

FOLD thy little hands in prayer,
Bow down at thy mother's knee ;
Now thy sunny face is fair,
Shining through thy golden hair,
Thine eyes are passion-free ;
And pleasant thoughts, like garlands, bind thee
Unto thy home, yet grief may find thee—
Then pray, child, pray!

Now thy young heart, like a bird,
Singeth in its Summer-nest ;
No evil thought, no unkind word,
No chilling Autumn-wind hath stirr'd
The beauty of thy rest :
But Winter cometh, and decay
Shall waste thy verdant home away—
Then pray, child, pray!

Thy bosom is a house of glee,
And gladness harpeth at the door ;
While ever with a joyful shout,
Hope, the May-queen, danceth out,
Her lips with music running o'er :
But Time those strings of joy will sever,
And Hope will not dance on for ever—
Then pray, child, pray!

Now thy mother's voice abideth
Round thy pillow in the night ;
And loving feet creep to thy bed,
And o'er thy quiet face is shed
The taper's shaded light:
But that sweet voice will fade away ;
By thee no more those feet will stay—
Then pray, child, pray!

THE LAND OF THORNS.

I beheld a strong city in the mountains, in which abode the wise, raising their heads in silence towards heaven, but nobles and servants descended from the city into the plain, and came into the Land of Thorns. And, lo! on a sudden there was a loud cry; fire had broken forth, and great terror had seized the hearts of all. That city, said Zal, is the House of Continuance, the Land of Thorns, the abode of evil here below, where joy and delight, and pain and sorrow, are mingled together; in yonder tower, are numbered the respirations of thy bosom. A storm cometh thence; an earthquake rocks the ground; loud sounds ascend from the deep; but all evil remains in the Land of Thorns, and man goeth to the City in the Clouds.—
ATKINSON'S Abridgment of the *Shah Nameh* of Ferdausi.

We have left the blue unclouded sky,
Its ever-radiant morns,
With weary step and weeping eye,
To wander in the LAND OF THORNS!

We will not sorrow or repine,
Though lone and drear our journey be,
For still thine eyes of mercy shine ;
Father of love ! we still have Thee !

We still have Thee ! the pilgrim's sighs,
By Thee are number'd, Lord of all ;
And not a tear from our sad eyes,
Unseen by Thee doth fall.

And in the night-time, round our bed,
When old familiar friends are flown,
Thy arm uplifts our aching head,
Our half-breathed words to Thee are known.

We grieve not that in former years—
Poor players on sin's flowery brink—
Thou gavest us the bread of tears,
And sorrow's bitter cup to drink.

The Persian poet fondly thought,
That when the storms of life were past,
Into a bower of beauty brought,
His happy soul would rest at last.

To us a brighter hope is given,
When death this mortal frame unshrouds ;
We have our Garden—in the Heaven,
Our City—in the clouds !

A SERMON FOUND IN A BROOK.

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brook,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

SHAKSPEARE.

LISTEN to yon merry bird,
Warbling in the apple-tree ;
Taught by the sunny day to pour
Its gladness into melody.

When the dying yellow leaf
Flutters in the Autumn air,
Its drooping spirit chilled with grief
Will not carol there.

But a pure and guileless heart
In sunshine singeth all day long,
Nor doth Summer e'er depart
From its quiet home of song.

Through the shady alders look,
Where the moonlight gilds the ground,
See the limpid village brook,
Journeying on with pleasant sound.

In the cloudiest Winter night,
It floweth, though unseen ;
We trace its course at morning light
By a brighter hue of green.

Such thy gentle life should be,
Ever peaceful and serene;
That each joyful eye may see
Where thy freshening path hath been.

THE FIRST-BORN.

Γυναί, φίλον μιν φεγγος ἤλιε τοδε.

EURIPID. *Frag. Danaæ.*

BEAUTIFUL, O woman! the sun on flower and tree,
And beautiful the balmy wind that dreameth on the
sea;
And softly soundeth in thine ear the song of peasants
reaping,
The dove's low chant among the leaves, its twilight
vigil keeping.

And beautiful the hushing of the linnet in her nest,
With her young beneath her wings, the sunset on her
breast;
While hid among the flowers, where the drowsy bee is
flitting,
Singing unto its own glad heart, the village child is
sitting.

And beautiful unto thy soul, at summer time to wait
Till Moonlight with her sweet pale feet comes gliding
to thy gate ;
Thy trusting eyes upturned unto thy love with timid
grace,
He feels thine arm about his neck, thy kisses on his
face !

Beautiful, O gentle girl ! these pleasant thoughts to
thee,
These golden sheaves, long harvested within thy
memory !
But when thy face grows dim with weariness and care,
And thy heart, forgetting all its songs, awaketh but to
prayer,—

Thou lookest for a gleeful face, thine opening eyes to
greet,
While Winter gathers on thy breast, the shadow round
thy feet :
Beautiful, O woman ! the green earth and the flowers
may be,—
But sweeter far the voice of thy first-born child to
thee !

AN IMITATION OF A GREEK EPIGRAM.

ONE morning in the grassy lane
A lily fair I spied;
The linnet's meek and tender strain
Rose sweetly by its side.

But in the soft declining eve,
Again I passed that quiet spot;
How could I choose but stand and grieve,
To find the simple flower was not?

And in the fate of that fair thing,
An emblem of my hope I found;
The morning saw it flourishing;
The evening, withered on the ground!

A FOUNTAIN IN THE WOODS REVISITED.

No spirit of an antique stream
Haunted a dwelling more divine,
More worthy of the poet's dream,
Than this green mossy shrine.

Dear wood, how well to me are known
Thy boughs by Summer-breezes fanned;
The dark nest where the dove hath flown,
The water ruffled by my hand.

And here, beneath these solemn bowers,
Where Silence loves to pitch her tent,
I watched the white feet of the Hours
Silver the stainless element.

Till Moonlight o'er the glimmering lawn,
Meek Ghost of Darkness, glided by;
While Evening, like a weary fawn,
Slept in the gardens of the sky.

For then life's sun its flush of light
Through every gathering vapour rolled:
Alas! how soon the wind of night
Scattered those clouds of gold.

And Fancy's face, no more to shine,
From her fair cave of beauty fled;
Her eyes forgot to beam on mine,
Her feet forgot my bed.

Grief found me then, and through my breast
The storm began to sweep;
Again I sought the green wood's rest,
But then, sweet fount, I came to weep.

Nor thoughtless do I sit and gaze
On thee as on an idle book;
Taught by the Lyre of other days,
I read a sermon in a brook*.

* Alluding to Shakspeare.

Thou guidest me as by the hand
Of some meek spirit, linked in mine,
Into an ever-blooming land,
A land of sweeter streams than thine.

And every sparkling drop that falls,
Dear charmer of the sylvan green,
Unto my musing heart recalls
The OMNIPOTENT—UNSEEN.

Through dreary wood and withered lea
Thy lucid water flows ;
Cheering the faint heart of the tree,
Waking the eyelids of the rose.

So in the Christian's panting breast
The springs of living water rise,
Murmuring of the Land of Rest,
Of greener woods, of brighter skies.

Mourn not, my heart, the idle hours
That I these pleasant paths have trod,
Musing among the peaceful bowers,
Where Nature leads me up to God !

KIRKE WHITE AND THE JOHNNIANS,

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST DAYS.

Unhappy White! while life was in its spring,
 And thy young Muse just waved her joyous wing,
 The spoiler came; and all thy promise fair
 Has sought the grave, to sleep for ever there.
 Oh! what a noble heart was here undone,
 When Science' self destroyed her favourite son!
 Yes, she too much indulged thy fond pursuit,
 She sowed the seeds, but death has reaped the fruit.

LORD BYRON.

Εὐδαίς ἐπ' ὀθιμένοις ματὴν σοφίης ποτ' εἰδρίψας
 Αἰθία, καὶ σὲ νιόν Μῆς ἐφίλησε ματὴν.

WALPOLE.

EVEN while I am writing these lines, news has been brought to me of another mind become dark, of another victim at the shrine of Science. Surely there can be no introduction more solemn or affectingly appropriate to a memorial of Kirke White than this tolling, as it were, over another departed intellect. It is to be deeply lamented that Mr. Southey, in that memoir in which he has embalmed the virtues of the youthful scholar, should, either from tenderness to the living, or any other motive,

have neglected to expose the fearful results of that *high-pressure system*, under which the faculties of White were crushed and annihilated. Were I to consult my own feelings, I too should indulge in a similar silence; but the alarming and increasing magnitude of the evil imperatively demands attention. The accusing voice ascends not alone from *one* grave; the cry of lamentation is not confined to a *single* hearth; it is not *one* mother who calls in vain for her absent son! The academical life of Kirke White, even viewed through the affectionate narrative of his biographer, was only a prolonged preparation for a sacrifice. The Death's Head is always visible under the mask. Anything more heart-rending than the sufferings of this gifted Martyr is not to be found in the pages of romance. We read, "of dreadful palpitations, of nights of sleeplessness; so that he went from one acquaintance to another, imploring society, even as a starving beggar entreats for food." Alas! that we should have his own authority for adding, that he sought for it in vain. In another letter he says, "While I am here I am wretched; the slightest application makes me faint." And again, "I am not an invalid; *my mind preys upon itself*." But throughout this season of mental torture the mistaken kindness of his friends was urging him forward; the worn-out energies were stimulated into a mo-

mentary and unnatural brightness, the fire was blown into a vivid but quickly-dying flame. He, too, as if deceived by the anticipations of others, began to dream of a "quiet parsonage," where his mother might pass the summer months with him. She, alas, knew not of his sufferings; for true love in its own afflictions is always dumb. Yet during all this period, Death was, we may say, sitting with him in his chamber; and every morning that broke upon his weary spirit, found him nearer the end of his journey. Melancholy as was the issue of his unhappy career, it would have been incalculably more wretched if he had survived. The intellect was perfectly exhausted,—the very waters of the mental life were dried up; and this creature of lofty impulses, of rare and poetical genius, of the tenderest sensibilities, of the most disinterested piety, would have dragged out an existence of dreary barrenness,—a tree in its early May, *dead at the top!*

I condemn no individual: my attack is upon the system. Hitherto, the name of Kirke White has been employed only to adorn a tale; let it now fulfil the more important service of pointing a moral. Let parents consider the value of those honours for which their children too often pay down the price of blood; and let those to whom are intrusted the hopes of a thousand families, remember

that learning profits the mind only so far as it nourishes and strengthens it, and not when, like a worm, it gnaws up the very root. Oh! if they could see, as I have seen, the bleeding spirit, the shattered nerves, the decayed energies, the palpitating heart, the darkened eye, the bewildered brain, and a series of calamities, the remembrance of which alone calls the tears into the eyes;—if, I say, they could see these things, they would urge the young aspirant to pause for a space in his triumphant course. A mind once beaten down, riseth not again; this temple, once overthrown, cannot be rebuilt. If he who perished on his road to glory had but abandoned for a little year the scene of his labours, he might now have been an eloquent, a fruitful, and a beloved servant of his Divine Master, blessing, and blest by thousands. With such a reward, the Christian could well have spared the first place in the Senate-House.

For the following recollections of one who has awakened sympathy in so many hearts, I am indebted to a friend of the poet and of myself, who desires to be distinguished only by the name of Seymour.

My acquaintance with Kirke White commenced in the lecture-room of St. John's, towards the end of the October Term of 1805. His constitutional deafness, and the distance at which he sat from the lecturer, rendered a neighbour with sharper ears of some benefit to him; and there was an air of humility and patience in his countenance, which never failed to interest a stranger. An acquaintance thus casually begun, ripened into a friendship, which I enjoyed only long enough to deplore with a deeper sorrow its abrupt and melancholy termination. The first morning I called upon him is now fresh in my remembrance. He kept, as you know, in the corner of the further court of St. John's; and I never pass the spot, even after a lapse of thirty years, without a melancholy reflection upon his fate.

He came to meet me with an open letter in his hand. The tears were in his eyes, and grasping my hand with great earnestness, he said, "I have just heard from my mother, and all the recollections of home and home-scenes are thronging into my mind. Alas! it will be long before I take root in this place. The first morning I awoke, I seemed to be in a dream. My eyes involuntarily turned to the spot where my little book-stand used to hang,

and that table on which I wrote so many of my early poems, during the few hours of my release from the drudgery of an attorney's office. I listened for the sounds which were wont to greet my ears; the lingering step at the chamber-door; the creeping of feet, interrupted by frequent pauses, to my bed-side; the partial unfolding of a shutter, and then the anxious and half-doubting scrutiny, while I perchance lay in feigned slumber with my arm across my eyes, pleased with bewildering love for a minute.

SEYMOUR.

“It is pleasant to reflect that, with very few exceptions, the domestic feelings have exercised the greatest influence on those men at whose feet we should be most anxious to receive instruction.—Literature is not degraded by many Sternes. Gray's Epitaph on his Mother is more affecting than anything in his poetry. How the heart rejoices with the mother of Richard Hooker, when the schoolmaster came to tell his parents of the genius and virtues of their son, and to urge them to abandon their intention of apprenticing him to a trade. How sincerely we fall upon our knees with her, making hourly prayers for the sick student at Oxford; and set out with him, on his recovery, to visit his paternal home in Exeter, a poor pilgrim,

on foot ! and who can refrain from joining in his beautiful and touching prayer, ‘that he might never live to occasion any sorrow to so good a mother, whom,’ he would often say, ‘he loved so dearly, that he would endeavour to be good as much for her sake as his own.’ Such feelings reflect a lustre upon the works of a man, and even the Ecclesiastical Polity seems to brighten in the recollection. After all, there is no eloquence like this visible rhetoric*.

“ Sanderson, also, in after-life was fond of remembering the early instruction of his father, whose praiseworthy practice it was to season his pleasant stories with short and virtuous apothegms—teaching and amusing at the same time. It was of this amiable prelate that Charles the First observed—‘I carry my ears to hear other preachers, but I carry my heart to hear Sanderson, and act accordingly.’ ”

WHITE.

“ An interesting essay might be composed upon the home-feelings of eminent men. Addison would

* A phrase of Hooker. A similar sentiment occurs in Bishop Taylor’s *Great Exemplar* (Considerations upon the preaching of John): “For the good example of the preacher is always the most prevailing homily: his life is his best sermon.”

have written it delightfully. Think of Herbert's visits to his mother at Chelsea, respecting the church he was desirous of repairing; and his humble hope that, at the age of thirty-three, she would suffer him to become a disobedient son. It was a consolation to the departing spirit of Donne, that in the hour of depression and decay he had been able to nourish and protect her who had watched over his own helplessness. Our future life often takes its colour from the instructions we gather at a mother's knees. The mother of Sir Henry Wotton was his first tutor; so I believe was Sir Philip Sidney's. To the diligence and care of his parent, Lorenzo de Medici probably owed that taste for poetry and learning, which obtained for him the title of the Magnificent; and the mother of Dante, by promoting the growth of her child's genius, assisted in realizing the vision in which she beheld him nourished by the fruit of the laurel, and quenching his thirst in the fountains of song. The philosopher Bacon, and the poet Thomson, imbibed wisdom and poetry from this guide. I have embodied my feelings of affection towards a mother (to whose love I am indeed beyond measure indebted), in a sonnet, which I fear has nothing but truth to recommend it.

AND canst thou, Mother, for a moment think
That we, thy children, when old age shall shed
Its blanching honours on thy weary head,
Could from our best of duties ever shrink?
Sooner the sun from his high sphere should sink,
Than we ungrateful leave thee in that day,
To pine in solitude thy life away;
Or shun thee tottering on the grave's cold brink.
Banish the thought! where'er our steps may roam,
O'er smiling plains, or wastes without a tree,
Still will fond memory point our hearts to thee,
And paint the pleasures of thy peaceful home;
While duty bids us all thy griefs assuage,
And smooth the pillow of thy sinking age.

SEYMOUR.

“From our mother often flows to us the love of reading,—that better and sweeter milk which nourishes our minds. I remember, as though it were yesterday, the hours I have sat at my mother's feet, listening with an almost breathless delight to some story of human suffering and trial, ever and anon rising from my little stool to peep under the leaves, and count the pages that remained. What an affliction the interruption of a visitor was then regarded, and how I lamented that the charm should ever be broken. I dwell upon these remembrances with peculiar satisfac-

tion, and with a humble gratitude to God, who has bestowed upon me so rich a blessing. For no fortune in the power of our friends to heap up for us can equal in value the love of study and contemplation. Riches make to themselves wings and flee away, but these qualities abide with us at all seasons, and under every dispensation. They are fountains which Winter cannot harden, nor Summer dry up; be it our care that no hostile hand poisons the purity of their waters. This sentiment, indeed, I am proud to share with men who make the fame of their country. Boyle, than whom a purer or a nobler spirit never adorned our literature, declared that he valued life only for the improvement of knowledge and the exercise of piety. Heinsius, the keeper of the library at Leyden, used to say, that, in closing the door of that beloved chamber, he seemed to release himself from ambition, avarice, and every other vice, and to be admitted into the company of the greatest intellects."

WHITE.

"I remember no poet in whom the sentiments we have been admiring were so lively as in Cowper. His verses on the receipt of his mother's picture, have always appeared to me some of the most pathetic in the language. With him, the love of

home was a passion. Like a flower transplanted from its native bed, his delicate and fragile spirit drooped and pined away the moment it was removed out of that atmosphere. His severer strains always grate upon my ear. This gentle bird, whose voice of gratitude ascends so beautifully to Heaven's gate, loses its charm when it takes up the harsh note of satiric song. We soon weary of its croaking round the venerable walls of Westminster*, and long to follow it into the pleasant garden and the boughs of the green-wood tree.

“It was a saying of Thomas à Kempis, that he had sought for rest in all places, and had found it only in seclusion and among books—*In angulis et in libellis*. Sir Thomas More delighted to return from the tumult of active life to the conversation of his wife and the endearments of his children. His own words convey a livelier picture. *Nempe reverso domum cum uxore fabulandum est, garriendum cum liberis*. His friend Erasmus has left a charming sketch of his house at Chelsea, within the walls of which dwelt his son and his wife, his three daughters and their three husbands, beside grandchildren. The sweet intercourse of such a family, combined with other causes to postpone the appearance of the *Utopia*. Our own history fur-

* Alluding to his Satire on Public Schools, and particularly on Westminster, where he was educated.

nishes several examples of this patriarchal mode of life, which still flourishes in Italy, where the traveler is frequently gratified by the delightful spectacle of a numerous family dwelling together in unity. But, alas! a change has come over our manners. No Lord Chancellor will ever more seek his father's blessing before he ascends the woolsack. There is something very touching in the declaration of an illustrious Roman over the dead body of his mother, that during seventy years he had never been reconciled to her,—because they had never disagreed. The frequent dissensions among relations may, I think, often be traced to a want of mutual courtesy and forbearance. It was very wisely remarked by a writer, in our day little known, Dr. Henry King, that

. It is the common fate
Of greatest duties to evaporate
In silent meaning.

“We satisfy our consciences with good intentions, without remembering, that of all theories, that of affection is the idlest. The most trivial action of our life may be sanctified by a spirit of piety, and recommended by its considerate tenderness. There is a wide difference between *tact* and *sensibility*,—one is of the head, the other of the heart.

“ I have met with a beautiful little apologue in an Eastern poet, which carries with it an affecting moral. Attracted by the fragrance of a clod of earth, he asks, ‘ Art thou musk?’ ‘ No.’ ‘ Art thou amber?’ It replied, ‘ I am but common earth, but the rose grew from me; its beneficent virtue penetrated my nature. Were it not for the rose, I should be but common earth.’ So it is with us. The heart which never glows with a desire to relieve the sufferings or cheer the sorrows of a brother or sister, is but common earth; but every pure feeling, every thought of disinterested love, every sentiment of charity, is a rose growing from the bosom, and penetrating our nature with its delicious and healthful perfume.”

My intercourse with Kirke White was, I grieve to say, soon interrupted by the illness of a near and dear relation, by whose bed-side I was detained for several months, until at length it pleased Him who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, to put the seal upon his eyes. When I returned to Cambridge, the melancholy decline of my friend broke upon me, and I saw that death had laid his wand upon another object of my regard. Yet, even at that eleventh hour, there might have been hope.

For some weeks before the student was gathered to his rest, the slightest glance at the pallid and

worn expression of his face would have sufficed to convince any one that without some prompt alteration of his pursuits, the days of the youthful scholar were numbered ; and, at one period, I had actually formed the determination of writing to his friends, and stating in distinct terms the horror of his situation. Would that I had done so ! He himself was perfectly conscious of his peril, and seemed every hour to detach himself more and more from the bonds of the world, and to prepare for his journey into a far country. Not a word of repining, not a murmur escaped his lips. He looked upon his past sufferings, his early struggles, and his present afflictions, as so many merciful indications of the love of his Heavenly Father.

“At best,” he said to me one evening, “our journey is along a rough and dangerous road ; but it should cheer us to remember that every evening brings us nearer to our Father’s House, which ever stands open to his prodigal and repentant children. The world is a harsh mistress, but consider how soon Death fetches us home from school. Every new affliction is, to the sincere Christian, only another friendly blow upon the fetters which bind him to his earthly servitude. Oh, happy hour ! when the prison-chamber shall brighten with the presence of the angelic minister, and the chains shall fall from our limbs, and the doors open before us. Whom

He loveth, He chasteneth. The stones must be beaten by the hammer before they are fit for the temple. Who would not hasten to the Supper of the Lamb, though he be summoned by a fierce messenger? who would not go to heaven with Elijah, 'though it were in a whirlwind?' Let us, my friend, remember these things in the morning; alas! the night cometh quickly, in which no man shall work. Let not the famine come upon us, not having a single sheaf in the garner; let us not be running about for oil when our lamps should be trimmed and burning."

I gazed upon his trembling and attenuated form, and thought that upon one of us, at least, the night was already descending. Of all the disguises under which death approaches us, consumption, in its external appearance, is the least repulsive. The Sun is beautiful in its setting. How White regarded the advances of that mournful calamity, which has laid so many beloved flowers in the dust, may be known from his affecting sonnet

TO CONSUMPTION.

GENTLY, most gently, on thy victim's head,
Consumption, lay thine hand! let me decay
Like the expiring lamp, unseen, away,
And softly go to slumber with the dead.

And if 'tis true, what holy men have said,
That strains angelic oft foretell the day
Of death to those good men who fall thy prey,
O let the ærial music round my bed,
Dissolving sad in dying symphony,
Whisper the solemn warning in mine ear :
That I may bid my weeping friends good bye,
Ere I depart upon my journey drear ;
And smiling faintly on the painful past,
Compose my decent head, and breathe my last.

“There is something even beautiful,” he said, “in dying thus; it is the death of a poet. The eye still bright; the heart undismayed; the fancy unclouded. Sickness presents the cup, and Hope crowns it with flowers. The dark chamber is cheered by music; the pillow gilded by sunshine. The victim goes down to the grave with a lantern in his hand. But,” he continued in a sadder tone, while the tears filled his languid eyes, “I fear that a severer trial is in store for me;” putting his hand to his forehead—“I feel death *here!*”

The latter days of Kirke White afford a very melancholy theme for the memory; and the few recollections I am now weaving together, are associated in my mind with the mournful spectacle of a youthful scholar prematurely withering away. In such a state of bodily debility, the mind could not be expected to take a lofty flight. Yet still the occasional gleams that broke in upon his suf-

ferings, served to cheer his spirit. Once, when a tranquil night had recruited his powers, he received me with the following verses from the poems of one, who, like himself, was early transplanted into an immortal Garden.

. I bud again—
 After so many deaths, I live and write;
 I once more smell the dew and rain,
 And relish versing. O my only LIGHT,
 It cannot be
 That I am he,
 On whom thy tempests fell all night.

These are thy wonders, LORD of LOVE!
 To make us see we are but flowers that glide,
 Which when we once can find and prove,
 Thou hast a Garden for us where to bide.
 Who would be more,
 Swelling through store,
 Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

He talked of the sceptical writers of the age with great sorrow and indignation. "If God," he said, "demanded of Cain—*Where is thy brother?* will He not also inquire of the self-destroyer—*Where is thy soul?* The world has no sight more terrible or affecting to a Christian eye, than intellect thus degraded and misapplied. The Temple of the Holy Ghost converted into a den of thieves; desecrated by the worship of a false

divinity. Learning, alas! has too many sons thus loving darkness rather than light."

I was lamenting the feebleness of modern Christianity.—"How weak," he exclaimed, with much fervour, "is the faith even of the most sincere! Jonas taken from the sea, Lazarus from the grave, Jeremy from his dungeon, Daniel from the lion's den: are not these instances of the Divine protection sufficient to inspire us with confidence? But we are still bowed by every wind. Our faith is dead and powerless; nothing starts into life beneath its embrace. Yet the Arm is not shortened that it cannot save. He who walked in the flames with the Hebrew brethren, was also present with Latimer and Ridley. And wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus Christ, there will He be in the midst of them. Oh, let us trust in HIM; and in our darkest and dreariest path walk on with cheerful hope, fearing nothing, since the great SHEPHERD is always nigh at hand, with his rod and staff ready to comfort and protect us."

He spoke with affectionate kindness of Henry Martyn, and mentioned a remark he had made to him, of the influence of religion even upon the accomplishments of literature. "Poetry itself," he observed, "grew more sweet and beautiful when read by the light of the Star of Bethlehem."

On commencing his residence at Cambridge, Henry had, by the advice of his friends, relinquished his poetical pursuits ; but he occasionally indulged his fancy in writing verses, some of which were hastily scrawled on his mathematical papers. This, he told me, was like refreshing his senses now and then with a nosegay. Brief and imperfect as these fragments are, they are enough to fill us with regret that the harvest was never reaped. He had made some progress in a sacred poem, which he called *The Christiad*. The two following stanzas, says Mr. Southey, affected me strangely ; and who can read them without experiencing the same sensations !

Thus far have I pursued my solemn theme,
With self-rewarding toil thus far have sung
Of Godlike deeds, far loftier than beseem
The lyre which I in early days have strung ;
And own my spirits faint, and I have hung
The shell that solaced me in saddest hour
On the dark cypress : and the strings which rung
With Jesus' praise, their harpings now are o'er,
Or, when the breeze comes by, moan and are heard no
more.

And must the harp of Judah sleep again ?
Shall I no more reanimate the lay ?
Oh ! thou who visitest the sons of men,
Thou who dost listen when the humble pray,

One little space prolong my mournful day!
One little lapse suspend thy last decree!
I am a youthful traveller in the way,
And this slight boon would consecrate to thee,
Ere I with Death shake hands, and smile that I am
free!

The mournful close of Kirke White's history is too familiar to the memories of us all to require any further mention. What I could add would only deepen the melancholy of the story. The "youthful traveller" has reached that Home, where no harp hangs upon the cypress!

COWLEY,
AND HIS FRIEND WILLIAM HERVEY.

He was my friend, the truest friend on earth ;
 A strong and mighty influence joined our birth.
 Nor did we envy the most sounding name
 By friendship given of old to Fame—
 None but his brethren he, and sisters knew
 Whom the kind youth preferred to me ;
 And even in that we did agree,
 For much above myself I loved them too.

Cowley on the death of Hervey.

COMPLAINTS of the deariness of Cambridge are as old as Milton. In our own days it was said, with some exaggeration, to have driven Robert Hall mad. "When I look upon a tree," he remarked, "it seems like Nature putting out signals of distress." Yet there is one walk behind the colleges which Meditation might love to haunt ; and here we know that Cowley delighted to wander, or muse by the river side, as he has told us in his own beautiful verses :—

. . . Cum me tranquilla mente sedentem,
 Vidisti in ripa, Came serene, tua.

The very name of Cowley has a peculiar charm. The sunshine of his temper diffused a warmth and

beauty over a cold and melancholy fortune. Johnson has ridiculed his love of the country, yet his writings amply prove it to have been sincere. He said finely, that he always went with delight out of the world, as it was man's, into the world, as it was Nature's, and as it was God's. And in another place,

God the first garden made, and the first city, Cain.

A line in which we have the probable original of Cowper's celebrated verse—

God made the country, and man made the town.

Cowley's sojourn at Trinity forms the pleasantest passage in his history. Cambridge, although reckoning our greatest poets among her children, has no cause to boast of their gratitude or affection. Milton's hostility and hatred are, alas, too well remembered; Spenser, indeed, has mentioned the University in terms of regard, but of his own college not a single notice any where occurs; while Dryden's preference of "Athens in his riper age," shows how freshly he bore in mind the fortnight's confinement within the college walls, &c. But with Cowley, his college seems to have possessed all the charm of a home, and he pours out his love for it, as for a mother. We hear of no

scholastical bur sticking in the throat, no voice cracked with metaphysical gargarisms* ; all is dear within and without ; every tree partakes his affection. How his heart beats, if we may employ the metaphor, in the dedication of his poems to *Alma Mater* !

O mihi jucundum Grantæ super omnia nomen !
 O penitus toto corde receptus amor !
 O pulchræ sine luxu ædes, vitæque beatæ,
 Splendida paupertas, ingenuusque decor.
 O chara ante alias, magnorum nomine regum
 Digna Domus ! Trini nomine digna Dei !
 O Sacri Fontes ! et sacræ vatibus umbræ,
 Quas recreant avium Pieridumque chori.
 O Camus ! Phœbo nullus quo gratior amnis !
 Amnibus auriferis invidiosus inops !
 Ah mihi si vestræ reddat bona gaudia sedis,
 Det que Deus doctâ posse quiete frui,
Qualis eram cum me tranquillâ mente sedentem,
Vidisti in ripa, Came serene, tua.

What a delightful picture have we of the poet in the last couplet, sitting in the golden quiet of his studious youth, with a tranquil and thoughtful mind, on the grassy bank of the Cam, bending over his own shadow in the unruffled water. We see him on the warm eve of some long Summer

* Milton.

day, reclined by the side of his friend Hervey—the Lycidas of Cowley—with half-closed eye watching the sunbeams through the leaves; while the Muse perhaps stood before him—

Bodied, arrayed, and seen by an internal light.

The Complaint.

Our poetical biography contains no episode more beautiful or touching than the friendship of these affectionate companions; both students of Trinity, both youths of genius, both eager in the pursuit of knowledge. Of Hervey, indeed, we know nothing, except from the tender elegy in which his sorrowful friend has enshrined his virtues and his talents.

No passage of that poem which Milton consecrated to the memory of Edward King, contains a thought so affecting, as the sudden tolling of the funeral bell in the following stanza:—

It was a dismal and a fearful night,
Scarce could the moon drive on the unwilling light,
When sleep, Death's image, left my troubled breast,
By something liker death possest.
My eyes with tears did uncommanded flow,
And on my soul hung the dull weight
Of some intolerable fate—
What bell was that? ah, me! too well I know!

Of his piety we have a delightful testimony in these lines :—

With as much zeal, devotion, piety,
He always lived, as other saints do die.
Still with his soul severe account he kept,
Weeping all debts out ere he slept.
Then down in peace and innocence he lay,
Like the sun's laborious light
Which still in winter sets at night,
Unsullied with his journey of the day.

The ear of Cowley was tuned to verse by the works of Spenser, which by a fortunate accident used to lie in his mother's parlour. How many poets have drawn the first milk of song from the bosom of the FAIRY QUEEN? Milton, More, Fletcher, Pope, and Thomson, will at once recur to the memory. But in Cowley we find little that breathes of his great Master. He never intoxicates the imagination with those dreams which Spenser brought from Italy and the East. His fancy is seldom rapt into—

The golden Indies in the air.

He carries us to no enchanted castles, whose casements open—

On the foam of perilous seas.

No gentle Una glides by with her milk-white lamb.

We catch no green visions of Elysian solitude, no Bowers of Beauty, no glimpses through trees of Paradise. His imagination was put into chains, ere it had reached its maturity. He followed in the train of Donne, and sought for distinction by the same arts: but nature sometimes prevailed over habit, and the language of his heart broke out in all its original simplicity and grace. His pensive morality, his vigour of expression, his force and novelty of sentiment, are more than enough to rescue his remains from oblivion. Let the reader who wishes fully to understand the acquirements of Cowley when a young student at Cambridge, read with care the notes upon the *Davideis* .

The following conversation is supposed to occur on Cowley's return to Trinity after an absence of two months, during which time he had waited in vain for any communication from his friend,—whom he affectionately and playfully upbraids for his silence.

“Fie, Will! shall I sit down and pelt thee with a hundred choice sentences stolen out of the grave Seneca, or his elder brethren, the Grecian Dramatists? Dost thou not merit them? Verily thou didst wait for the Greek Kalends to give thee a pen! Methinks, you might have been wandering along the reedy shores of Acheron, or strewing flowers

before the silver seat of Proserpine*, or quarrelling with Charon about a bad obolus, for aught that I, your ancient companion on the banks of the Cam, knew of your employment. Yet I did not forget thee, William! and often, often, during the last two months, have the quiet grassy courts of Trinity risen before me, with those shady walks—the true bowers of the Pierian birds—and those beloved trees, which have in so many dewy hours beheld us breaking the moonlight shadows with our feet, beneath their umbrageous branches†.

“Cambridge I think can boast of more poets than trees—but to us every one is known. From that yew-tree at Trinity Hall, where tradition tells us the conceited Harvey—Spenser’s friend—loved to display his Italian hose, to the quiet garden of Pembroke, and the spot still hallowed as “Ridley’s Walk.” What richer blessings can fortune have in store for us, than those she has already showered

* See *The Fairy Queen*.

† So in the *Elegy on Hervey*.

Ye fields of Cambridge, our dear Cambridge, say
Have ye not seen us walking every day?

Was there a tree about which did not know

The love betwixt us two?

Henceforth ye gentle trees for ever fade,

Or your sad branches thicker join,

And into darksome shades combine,

Dark as the grave wherein my friend is laid.

from her golden horn. She has given us a home where Genius and Learning have so long abode. The green paths we tread have been trodden by Spenser. Our foot cannot fall upon a spot which learning has not ennobled, or poetry endeared, or piety made holy ground. Bacon goes before us through the gate of Trinity; the shade of Chaucer brightens the courts of Clare; the martyr who suffered and died with Latimer, consecrates the very stones of Pembroke.

“But these glorious influences are vain, unless they kindle in us the desire of the same excellence. The trophies of triumphant Genius charm the soul to no purpose, if they stir us not up, as with the voice of a trumpet, to go forth and conquer. Those sublime poems, those eloquent exhortations, those beautiful strains of fervent and religious hope, are unprofitable as the light down on the road-side thistle, if they fail to inspire us with a passionate craving to be numbered with them who being dead, yet speak; whose voices live through the world, while their bodies moulder in the earth. A purer voice, indeed, than ever broke from mortal lips, has commanded us to work while it is day; nor is this sacred injunction limited to our religious duties, albeit to them doth its peculiar application belong. The arm that hurled the stone into the brain of the Philistine had not been hardened

by twenty Summers. My friend! let us follow the example of the son of Jesse. When, indeed, should we toil, if not now, when, by the mercy of God! we have friendly eyes to watch over us, friendly hands to protect us, the love and anxieties of a whole household bound up in our welfare! Be sure that not a single hour returns to heaven, from the time when the sun looks into the linnet's nest, till it sends the lamb to its grassy cradle, without carrying some prayer for us to our heavenly Father:

*Τῷδε θρονῷ πυροῖντι παρίστασιν πολυμοχθοὶ
Ἀγγελοὶ.*

“The hasty scrawling of our name upon an old book, or an angling-rod, or a theorbo* long silent, recalls the absent one to the memory; and then, perchance, the tears creep into the glistening eyes of a fond sister, or a little brother, whose wooden stool hath oftentimes been betwixt our knees. And ‘What is William doing, or where is he now?’ rises to the lips. But when the pale brother of sleep hath rocked into quietness the graver friend, whom some of us have not known long enough to

* Theorbo, an improvement of the French lute, from the Italian *Tiorba*. See an engraving of one in Hawkins’s *History of Music*, Vol. iv., p. 110.

love*—how much more sharply doth care dwell in the heart of her who hath only God for her husband! How painful the reflection in future years of having driven sleep from her eyes, or planted a thorn in her pillow!”

HERVEY.

“Thou, at least, hast never moistened that pillow with a tear.”

COWLEY.

“God forbid that I should wake a grief in that bosom, on which my childish heart hath so often forgot its own. But surely, if we had no better incitement, we ought to seek after knowledge for our own sake; for what is it but sowing the grain whose harvest we are to reap; planting the vineyard whose grapes we are to gather; rearing the

* This allusion to the poet's father will go to the hearts of many. It may not be uninteresting to quote a passage from *Love's Riddle*, where the shepherd Alupis, in reply to the question of Calidora, how he happened to know so much of city life, says, Why, I'll tell you, Sir,—

My father died, (you force me to remember
A grief that deserves tears,) and left me young.

The father of Cowley, indeed, died before the birth of his son, and the application of the passage, therefore, is not direct; but in the mind of the thoughtful scholar of Westminster School, the loss of a parent was likely to be a subject of meditation.

fig-tree under whose shadow we are to repose? Let not the spring-time depart without its seed. O happy, and thrice happy he, who can bear a cluster of fruit to them who have nourished him; fruit, sweeter to their lips, who for us have borne the heat and burden of the day, than ever swelled with purple wine in the gardens of Engaddi. The countenance of Wisdom—the celestial Venus—is always beautiful; not the morning or evening star is fairer—*Και ως ουτε εσπερος, ουτε εως ουτω καλα.** But never does she dawn upon the beholder with so sweet and golden a lustre, as in the early morning-time of our youth. The race, of a truth, is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but as the defeated candidate for the Garland departed not from the Palæstra without some increase of skill—some new grip which may ensure to him a future victory; so we, though driven down by a more nervous arm, or entangled in the meshes of a more cunning embrace, shall not have been fighting like one that beateth the air. Even our vanquishment will become the mother of victory. For so, in the public games of Greece, they chose the palm as the sign and prize of the triumph, because it is the nature of that plant to thrive and flourish under pressure.”

* Plotinus.

HERVEY.

“A very pretty flourish of fancy, methinks, wherewith to disband that array of grave authorities which thou hast brought to the charge. But wherefore such a shower of saws and instances? For do I not love learning almost as much as I love thee? and though my silence, perchance, may have spoken an oblivious mind, yet wer't thou never absent from my heart, during the long eight weeks of thy wanderings. I missed thee in all our accustomed haunts. The Cam reflected only one shadow; the warm grass was darkened only by one figure. But, most of all, the coming on of evening awoke a longing for my lost companion. I waited for thee, though in vain, in my solitary chamber, where so oft the moonlight hath crept in upon our book at the window, where we stood with eyes straining in the shadowy light over some page of mild Spenser, or ever-youthful Chaucer, or earlier bard of Greece or Latium.”*

* Cowley has tenderly recorded these Evenings:—

Say, for you saw us, ye immortal lights,
 How oft unwearied have we spent the Nights,
 Till the Ledæan stars, so famed for love,
 Wondered at us from above.
 We spent them not in toys, in lusts, or wine,
 But search of deep philosophy,
 Wit, eloquence, and poetry;
 Arts which I loved, for they, my friend, were thine!

COWLEY.

“How I long to renew those happy evenings! to dwell again with the mighty and noble of the earth. A memory enriched by study is the real enchanter; no blast from the enemy’s trumpet can dissolve into air the stately fabrics which she buildeth. The true scholar, whose mind is nourished by poetry and philosophy, carries a magic ring upon his finger. By a mere act of volition he is transported in the arms of Genii, over stormy seas and trackless deserts; he becomes a denizen of every clime; a citizen of every polity. His chamber brightens with the footsteps of Juliet; the woods echo with the trumpets of Fontarabia. He throws a bridge over the darkness of years, and mingles with the rush before the judgment seat of Appius; or floats with Cleopatra down the Cydnus in her burnished galley; or is borne with the rejoicing multitude to the crowning of Petrarch in the Capitol. Let us sit down here, where the sun chequers the grass with this tremulous dance of light, and the soft air creeps pleasantly through the leaves over head. The melody that sighs through the verses of Moschus is not sweeter.*

* Cowley has himself very happily described a similar feeling in the lines attached to the *Essay on Solitude*:

Here let me, careless and unthoughtful, lying,
Hear the soft winds above me flying,
With all their wanton boughs dispute,
And the more tuneful birds to both replying,
Nor be myself too mute.

“Heaven preserve me from the Babel-roar of busy life. *Quid Romæ faciam? mentiri nescio.* Before the even-song was heard I should pine to flee away from the City of Crime into some little Zoar, where I might, as Maro sings, *studiis florere ignobilis otii.* How should the poet listen to the Charmer in such a tumult? Could Spenser have written in the hum of a great town those lovely verses which the Muse brought to him on the banks of Mulla?”

HERVEY.

“Nay, but was it not in London that *Juliet* dawned upon the fancy of sweet Shakspeare, and Fletcher courted his *Faithful Shepherdess*, and the soft *Hero* charmed the memory of poor Kit Marlowe? Surely the Muse doth appear to her children, albeit under a cloud, even in the busiest streets. The stranger seeth her not; but they know, by the ambrosial beauty of the air, that a celestial visitant hath alighted in the midst of them. And beside this, doth not a poetic heart carry all the delights of the seasons with it? So Shakspeare saw the moonlight sleeping on the bank, while walking, perchance, along the Blackfriars; and the Nightingale, which Sappho calls

Ἦρος ἀγγελος ἡμεροφωτος ἀηδων.*

- * Which Ben Jonson has charmingly translated :—
The dear good Angel of the Spring.

sprang up beneath his feet in the stir of Cheapside. Think you that he thought of flowery hedge or sunny grass then, or rather was it not all May-time in his heart?

COWLEY.

“Who pelts now, Will? But granting that thy arguments hit the mark, I cannot turn from my early love. A small house, a pleasant garden decked out with flowers and healthful fruits, with one fair face to smile upon me and brighten at my happiness, and store of precious books for Summer and Winter hours;—in such a hermitage, and with such companions, how inaudibly the hours would glide away*. Our calendar would be marked only

* Cowley in several of his poems has sketched, in charming colours, his scheme of rural retirement.

Yet ere I descend to the grave,
May I a small house and large garden have,
And a few friends, and many books, both true:
Both wise, and both delightful too.

And since Love ne’er will from me flee,
A mistress moderately fair,
And good, as guardian angels are,
Only beloved, and loving me!

In his *Essay ‘Of Greatness,’* he speaks of a “convenient brick house with decent wainscot, and pretty forest-work hangings.” “Lastly, (for I omit all other particulars, and will end with that which I love most in both conditions), not whole woods

by white stones ; and yet how the multitude clings to the world, until some affliction is sent in mercy, to wean the child by making bitter the breasts of its adopted mother ; and even then it longs to return to her arms. The love of the world is the universal passion. How many stones have been flung at its head ; yet the Giant lives ! Preachers have thundered at it, poets have whipped it, philosophers have laughed at it. What do men go out into the wilderness to see ? Vice predominant, learning despised, religion trampled under foot. Each folly jangling its bells,—each tinkling cymbal collecting its swarm of proselytes. What can a good man hope for in the whirl and noise of company ; how can he listen to the music of his own thoughts, or nourish those young and tender imaginings which are only reared into mature stature and beauty by the milk of a purer and better time. This sequesterment is not, indeed, a ladder for the ambitious spirit to mount ; yet how often it leads to heaven !

“ The amusements of the city weary and satiate us ; but Nature, like a tender mother, has always some new present for her children ; nor ever sends

cut in walks, nor vast parks, nor fountains, nor cascade gardens ; but herb, and flower, and fruit gardens, which are more useful, and the water every whit as clear and wholesome as if it darted from the breasts of a marble nymph, or the urn of a river god.”

them from her lap without a blessing. Doth not Contentment more often pitch her tent beside the woodland spring, or in the warmth of a sheltered glen, than by the gate of princes? Every walk in the garden, or the fields, refreshes and delights the soul with that visible eloquence which our heavenly Father hath diffused over all his works. Every blade of grass, every blossom on the bough, every carol among the leaves, is only another letter in the alphabet of the religion taught by Nature.

“ Can we wonder that the seeds of faith and purity shoot up and flourish in this genial atmosphere? Alas! how soon they perish in those unwatered hearts which are hardened by the pursuits of ambition and wealth! Even the qualities which have already blossomed into beauty and fragrance, are often neglected and trodden down, for our hands are far too busy in Mammon’s service to tie up the drooping flower. Yet men still persevere in seeking, with their miserable sophistries, to entangle our judgments; preaching up the value of dignities, the importance of power, the glory of palaces. They still continue to boast of their servitude to that Moloch, whose dissonant music drowns the voice of reflection and wisdom. Oh, fools! not to perceive their chains, though the iron be cased in gold. *Armatorum trecentæ Perithoam cohibent*

*catenæ**. Miserable deceptions! The gossamer thread on yonder leaf is not more fragile. The feeble wings of a fly in Autumn would break through such a cobweb. No! here would I set up my tabernacle,—here would I leave my Pillar of Memorial. The place has a sanctity for me,—the faces are familiar to me: I love even the trees around us. Here let me remain.”

HERVEY.

“And me, too, while I have thee, Cowley. But sometimes, at least, we may go into the world to study man, as a surgeon visits the abodes of the sick, to search into their diseases. How can we

* Why are not the *Essays* of Cowley printed in a separate form for general circulation? Every lover of English literature has their beauties by heart; but I cannot refrain from quoting one brief passage from the ‘*Essay on Liberty*,’ as a most admirable commentary on the preceding remark. He is speaking of the great rich man. “He’s guarded with crowds, and shackled with formalities. The half hat, the whole hat, the half smile, the whole smile, the nod, the embrace, the positive parting with a little bow; the comparative at the middle of the room, the superlative at the door: and if the person be *pan hyper sepastus*, there’s a *hyper-superlative* ceremony then of conducting him to the bottom of the stairs, or to the very gate; as if there were such rules set to these Leviathans, as are to the sea: *Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further.*”

To understand the full meaning and force of these polite ceremonies, a man must be a scholar and — poor.

hope to heal the wounded spirit, if we know not its anatomy ; if we have not examined those fine and delicate sympathies which constitute the nervous system of the mind. The philosopher may have store of simples, but what will they avail if the skill to apply them be wanting. Cannot we carry our poetry and love of the country with us into the world, as we do the love of our homes and of our mothers? Can ——”

COWLEY.

“ Stop, William ! All thou seekest can be found here ; let us carefully explore our own hearts, and the great heart of Humanity will be as open before us, as though Nature had shaped a living man in crystal to aid our studies*. Once more,—Why should we set out on this perilous journey? Why barter our health, our innocence, and our peace, for a few splendid feathers, or coloured beads? Why venture our hands into the lion’s mouth, for the little honey in his jaws? Dost thou thirst after glory? then sit here and gather it. Fame can translate thy works into all tongues, and carry thy name to the corners of the earth. Oh, happy student—

* See Cowley’s *Ode to Dr. Scarborough*.

Whose brow is wreathed with the silver crown
Of clear content*.

So, when thou art sleeping in the dust, reverential feet shall tread the floor of thy chamber, and the books marked by thy finger, the paper traced by thy pen, yea, the very table that hath been the mute companion of thy toil, shall become, as it were, sainted relics."

WHEN Cowley uttered these words he was writing his *Davideis*; and an anticipation of his own future distinction may have crossed his mind, for Genius is often blest with the prophet's eye. How gladly, in his own case and that of others, would we realize his affectionate aspiration; and tread that chamber where, with Hervey, he spent the night

In search of deep philosophy,
Wit, eloquence, and poetry.

Or sit down in the room where the Muse brought flowers to Milton, to strew over the grave of his sister's child:

Soft silken primrose fading timelessly;

Or look out from the window through which the sun shone on the learned visions of Spenser. Pem-

* Marston.

broke has undergone so few alterations during the last three hundred years, that the rooms once occupied by the noblest and purest spirit that ever hallowed the walls, are still in existence, and are supposed to be those now inhabited by the Tutor of the College. In the Combination Room hangs his portrait, almost as delicious to look upon as his own pictures.

THE HISTORY OF A LOST STUDENT; TAKEN DOWN FROM HIS OWN LIPS.

If there be any Hell in this world, they which feel the worm of conscience gnawing at their hearts, may truly say, that they have felt the torments of Hell. Who can express that man's horrors but himself! Sorrows are met in his soul as at a Feast. FEAR, THOUGHT, and ANGUISH, divide his soul between them. All the Furies of Hell leap upon his heart like a stage. THOUGHT calls to Fear, Fear whistleth to Horror, Horror beckoneth to Despair, and saith, '*Come and help me to torment this sinner!*'—*The Betraying of Christ*, 1592.

My first curacy was a parish in Cambridge, which, perhaps, more than any other in the county, requires the constant and unwearied solicitude of the pastor. An older minister would have regarded such a cure with apprehension; but I, with the ardour of youth, only congratulated myself upon the wide field that lay open for the employment of my religious energies. I began to enumerate the wanderers I should reclaim, the wavering I should confirm, the pious I should establish. How far these sanguine anticipations were realized is immaterial to the present narrative.

I was sitting alone on a dreary evening in November, fatigued with the labours of the day, and thinking upon that great account of our flocks, which we shall one day have to render to the SHEPHERD of Souls, when a note was brought to me, the writing of which, though evidently traced by an agitated hand, immediately recalled to my memory a dear friend of my youth, of whom I had been unable for several years to gain any intelligence. It merely stated his severe illness, and requested my earliest attendance. Such a summons allowed of no hesitation, and I determined to set out instantly with the messenger. Mournful were the thoughts which came trooping up in that melancholy walk. Every scene of my college life rose to my eyes with vivid reality; and intimately connected with each was the sick student.

It was nine o'clock when I reached the place of my friends sojourn. By the dim light of the lantern which my companion carried, I succeeded in picking my way along a winding grass-covered path, leading to one of the most desolate cottages I had ever seen. I could not resist the impulse to stop for a minute and look around; but the darkness of the night was increased by a thick fog, which rendered it impossible to distinguish any object out of the small circle of faint shadow cast by the lantern. The cottage stood alone, and at a considerable

distance from any other habitation: no sound, save the barking of a dog in a neighbouring farm-yard, and the rattle of wheels along the distant road, broke the silence of the hour. Sick of the melancholy scene, I walked up to the door, and gently lifted the latch. The spectacle that presented itself to my eyes I can never forget. The sick man lay upon a bed in the corner of the room, with his face turned to the wall, and from the deep groans that continually broke from him, he was evidently in great suffering. My entrance had not aroused him, and I lingered at the door to survey the place. The chamber was not more than ten or twelve feet square; and from the green patches of damp along the walls and ceiling, appeared to have been for some time uninhabited. The furniture, if I may employ the term, consisted of one or two broken chairs, and an old deal table, on which was placed a rush-light inserted in the neck of a bottle. On the hearth, a few embers sent up an occasional glimmer, serving only to display the gloom of the place. I shuddered while I contemplated this picture of misery, and stooping over the bed, in a low voice whispered "*Sydney!*" The sound seemed to blend with his meditations, for he continued muttering to himself, while his fingers wandered listlessly over the shadowy wall.—"Yes; I did not shed her blood, but I murdered her!"

Although gathering his words very indistinctly, I felt naturally somewhat alarmed, and touching his arm softly with my hand, I exclaimed in a louder tone—"Sydney—my friend Sydney!"

He turned immediately, and uttering a piercing shriek, closed his eyes, and relapsed into his former manner. Alone, and destitute of every assistance, for even my guide had departed, I was doubtful what course to follow. Sitting down upon the bed, I took his hand in mine, and waited for his revival with painful anxiety. As I gazed upon his pale and emaciated features, I sought in vain for the beautiful expression of peace and religious hope, which used to breathe such a charm over his countenance. His eyes were sunken, and his cheeks worn into hard furrows. I mused in uncertainty upon the melancholy change. In a few minutes he opened his eyes, and looking up into my face, whispered almost inaudibly, "Seymour! what Seymour!" The tone in which he pronounced these words, and the look which accompanied them, were so pathetic, that I could not restrain my feelings, and we wept together.

I wrapped the clothes around him, and folding myself up in my cloak, for the fire had died out, and the night grew chilly, prepared to pass the dreary hours until morning. Sydney slept sweetly; and if it had not been for an occasional start, I

might have imagined that his malady was departing. After trying in vain to compose myself to rest, I drew the rush-light to me, and taking a copy of the *Orestes of Euripides* from my pocket, I soon forgot my own sorrows in those of the Grecian orphans. I was lingering over the touching picture of Electra sitting by her sick brother's bed—the most pathetic scene in the Athenian Drama—when I was suddenly aroused from my dream by a shriek from Sydney. I turned round, but he still slumbered; in a moment he cried out again, and sprang up with convulsive energy. I threw my arms around his neck, and endeavoured to restrain him; but my embrace only heightened his terror. “Away there, away!” he exclaimed with fearful vehemence, as he wrestled in my arms. “Away! you are Satan; and you press upon me thus, that you may crush down my soul to Tartarus!” I still strove to keep him down, but he shook me from him as a giant would toss away a cedar bough. I gazed upon him with horror, not without some fears for my own safety. As he sat upright in the bed, his long black hair scattered from his wild and glaring eyes, and his lips covered with foam, I could not but compare him to Orestes tormented by the Furies, where the poet represents him dashing aside his fond and watching sister, and leaping out to rush upon the avenging spirits.

The violence of the paroxysm gradually abated; and on my approaching the bed, he stretched out his hand, saying "Come nearer;" and laying his head upon my shoulder, he added, "I have had such a dream, Seymour! I have seen my mother, and she——." Here his voice faltered; and while I supported his head on one arm, and smoothed his pillow with the other, he fell into a tranquil sleep, which lasted until the morning.

With the early dawn, I hastened to the nearest farm-house, and returned with a gig to convey my unfortunate friend to my own dwelling; and gladly did I hail the spire of my little church, as it rose over the lime-trees. I had previously taken care to have my own room prepared for his reception, and I felt a burden taken off my heart, when I beheld him lying on that bed, and watched over with all the tenderness of my good housekeeper. Poor Mary Lawrence! thou art gone to thy last home, and the grass is flourishing upon thy grave, in the burial-ground of A——; but a heart more open to melting charity, or more lowly or contented in its desires, never returned to the God who gave it.

I lost no time in sending to a physician, who resided in the adjoining town, and of whose knowledge and experience I had reason to form a very high opinion. Dr. L—— rode over the same

evening. Sydney was reading the *Holy Living and Dying* of Jeremy Taylor when we entered the apartment. Dr. L——, who was not only a man of high talent, but a Christian, sat down by the bed, and taking Sydney's hand in his own, inquired, with great tenderness, into the nature of his symptoms. I know nothing more distressing to the sufferer, or his friends, than an analytical history of every pain and sensation. Sydney's complaint was dorsal consumption, in its most decided and afflicting form. I watched the countenance of Dr. L—— with earnestness, as he listened, in melancholy silence, to the Student's narrative of his sufferings; and I felt confident that my friend's sojourn would not be long upon earth. "You may give him anything he likes," said the doctor, when we had left the room; "the powers of medicine can effect nothing for him; the Physician who can alone aid him in this hour of nature's sorrow, is our Saviour Jesus Christ." I answered not, for my heart was too full for utterance. "It was kind of you," said Sydney, when I returned to his chamber, "to procure a physician for me, but it is vain to lull my conscience asleep with idle hopes of recovery, for I know too well by these tokens, (placing his hands on his temples, which throbbed with a burning pain,) that I cannot long survive; but before I go hence, I would explain to you one or two of the

causes which have brought me to my present condition. I have struggled with my pride, and have obtained the mastery. When we are within a few hours' journey of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, it behoves us to put off the purple garments, and to unbind the garland from our head, like guests who have departed from a costly banquet, and are preparing to lie down and take their rest.

“ When I bade you farewell under the portal of Trinity, ten years ago, I thought not that so many years,—and *such* years!—would roll by ere we should meet again. I arrived in London in time for the Norwich mail, which passed within six or seven miles of my father's house. I had written to announce my return, and when the mail drove up to the inn at Ingastrie, John, who in my infancy drew me to school, was waiting with the pony-chaise. When was pleasure seen without its shadow? My happiness in the present instance was sadly diminished by the news of my father's declining health. ‘His strength is going, sir,’ said the old man, and he rubbed a tear from his cheek as he spoke. ‘Master, you know, sir, was always walking about the fields, and breathing the blessed air; but now he does not leave the house for days. At the last harvest-home, he left us before the second song was ended.’ My faithful companion would have continued the discourse, but I had heard

enough to alarm me, and pushed on with greater rapidity, up the green lane leading to our house.

“ My father and mother had heard the sound of the wheels, and notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, were at the gate to receive me. You, my dear friend, are blessed with affectionate parents, and can enter into my feelings, as I felt myself alternately pressed in their arms. My mother parted the hair on my forehead, and discovered a fresher colour on my cheek ; and my father put his hand upon my shoulder, and congratulated me on the increasing width of my chest, and manliness of my bearing. When the excitement of our first meeting had subsided, I had time to notice the alarming alteration in his appearance ; even then the hand of death was upon him, and in ten days from that evening, I was sitting by his pillow, reading extracts from those books, few but excellent, which comprised his unpretending course of divinity. Why should I detain you with records of a sick chamber ? It is sufficient to say that my beloved parent was taken away before that son, in whom he had treasured up all his hopes, could bring down his gray hairs in sorrow to the grave.

“ My father’s death was attended by no particular suffering ; it resembled the placid slumber of a weary man, more than the parting of an immortal soul. On the evening which terminated his mortal career,

I was sitting by his bed ; my mother having retired to take a little rest. Suddenly he turned to me, saying, in a very clear but faint voice, ‘ Harry, I am dying.’ ‘ Oh, say not so, my father—there is hope yet ;’ and throwing my arms around his neck, I hid my face in his bosom. I placed his weak and trembling hand upon my head, and I felt that he was praying. I wished to call my mother, but he would not : ‘ Let her sleep !’ For a few minutes he was again silent. At length he said, ‘ Give me thy hand, my son.’ He took it, and pressing it gently, added, in the words of that great Lady Russell, for whose virtues he entertained the deepest veneration, ‘ Live virtuously, my dear boy, and you cannot live too long, or die too soon.’ These were the last words he spoke : I found the pressure of his hand growing fainter and fainter ; but several minutes had elapsed before I discovered that another innocent and guileless spirit had flown to the bosom of its Creator. Oh, Seymour ! how a Christian dies ! It seemed as if my father’s tree of life had been softly shaken, and the yellow leaves dropped from the boughs inaudibly.”

Sydney’s voice faltered, and I too was deeply affected, for the simplicity and earnestness of his manner went to the heart. “ Ten days,” he continued, “ after this dreadful event, I followed my father’s body to the grave. The church was only

distant a hundred yards from the parsonage, and was remarkable for the peculiar beauty of the surrounding scenery. I had declined the offers of the neighbouring gentry to attend the funeral; for I do not honour the fashion that bows a man into his sepulchre.

“It was a delicious day in June; and as I felt my feet sink into the green turf, glowing with flowers, and beheld the shadow thrown by the pall upon the grass, and heard the bees humming their sleepy music amid the wild flowers, my heart within me was desolate. The little gate of the churchyard closed behind us with a melancholy sound. It would not shut after *him* any more!

“When we came out of the church, and gathered in a circle round the grave, I think a dry eye was not to be found. Two orphan children, brother and sister, for whom my father had provided, crept noiselessly up to my side, and stood hand in hand, silently gazing, while the field-flowers dropt, forgotten, from their hands. Amid the group of villagers, either led by affection or curiosity to witness the mournful ceremony, was a young and lovely girl, who, with a most tender patience and solicitude, supported an aged and infirm woman, whom I well remembered as an object of my father's bounty. My heart was, indeed, at that moment too much overwhelmed by sorrow for him on whose

coffin the earth was falling, to think of her beauty ; but who shall say that even in that melancholy hour the hand of one great Enemy might not have dropped into my heart the seed of that accursed passion, which was so soon to overshadow and destroy myself, and all that was dear to me ! By degrees the violence of my grief began to abate, and I resumed my accustomed walks in the neighbourhood, and my intercourse with the villagers, among whom I was always a welcome guest. Oh, that *one* cottage had never known the sound of my footsteps ! My first visits to the aged object of my father's charity were actuated only by benevolent motives ; but who could gaze long on Mary Gray, without yielding to those eyes radiant with tenderness ; that sweet, serious, religious, smile ; that voice of simple, but melting pathos ! Sorrow and love could not exist together. The closed shutters, the silent garden, the desolate house, faded every day more and more from my mind. Guard, oh, guard against the first temptation that may solicit you. When the evil Spirit has entered the soul, the Sacred Fire will be quickly extinguished, and the Vestals of the heart forsake it, to return no more !

“ You shrink from the recital ; but hear me to the end. We used to amuse ourselves at Cambridge with comparing and analysing the various systems of Philosophy ; the wisdom of Socrates,—the beau-

tiful mysticism of Plato. Out upon them all! They define Virtue until we are acquainted with every lineament. Virtue, saith Aristotle, is a natural impulse towards good actions, transformed by prudence into a habit. Virtue, affirms Plato, proceeds from God. I will prove Reason to be Virtue, swears Diogenes. They weave a silver veil before our eyes, which the first breath of passion scatters to the winds. There is one Book, indeed, whose philosophy never deceives the sincere inquirer, but I wanted the humility to consult it. If I were to publish these records of my life, how the voice of criticism would be raised against the extravagance, the exaggeration of my narrative. Alas! how can one, turning over the pages of a history in the quiet of his chamber, with his thoughts undisturbed, his evil appetites unawakened, comprehend the feelings of a man tossed in the tempest of a terrible temptation, and beholding, with affrighted eye, every bulwark with which he had surrounded the virtuous principles of his soul beaten down before the rush of new-born desires."

Sydney's agitation and suffering had become so intense, that, overcome as I was by his melancholy story, I urgently entreated him to relinquish the recital. "Nay," said he, with vehemence, "let me go on rending open these gashes in my memory, which time shall never heal. I will, however," he

added with a mournful smile, "hasten along my road to ruin. My moral nature underwent a temporary change. The poison spread through every vein, until all the healthy energies of the mind were infected. Thus it is that one sin always calls in another, and each conqueror rivets fresh irons upon the Soul. How can I proceed? I was eloquent—Mary was weak: we fled to London! Thus did I triumph in my guilt; but the avenger was at our heels: the sword was already over our heads. In three short months Mary was taken from me by a malignant fever, in which I also lay for several weeks upon the borders of the grave.

"When reason returned, the first object that met my eyes was the pale, grief-stricken countenance of my deserted parent. Oh, Edward! the ocean hath a limit to its billows; but who shall set bounds to a mother's love? who shall say to it, *Thus far shalt thou come, and no further*. Let the night rest upon my penitence,—upon her forgiveness! Certainly my repentance was sincere: I can bear to reflect upon *that*. My mother's income had died with my father, and my desertion had plunged her into deeper difficulties. We now took a humble lodging in the neighbourhood of Finsbury-Square, and I devoted all my heart to her comfort and support. I wrote in Newspapers and Magazines, and described the entire circle of literary wretchedness.

I laboured hard, but I gained little. How vividly are the sufferings of that period graven on my memory. But my misery had not reached its height. The Cup was not yet quite mixed. The illness of my mother filled it to the brim.

“It was on a Saturday—I had been writing incessantly the whole day, and was leaning over the nearly extinguished fire—when the mistress of the house sent me a note, enclosing a notice to quit on the following Saturday. Edward, can any crime, hardly the most heinous of all, equal the crime of being poor? Wealth is the standard of excellence: a man is honest, and clever, and amiable, in proportion to the plenitude of its endowment; riches confer on him power, and beauty, and virtue, and intellect: Poverty gives him scorn, and ignorance, and impotence, and disgrace. That night I did not sleep. The morning was delightful, and I wandered along until I reached Oxford-Street. It was Easter-Sunday, and the streets swarmed with crowds of cheerful idlers.

“I rambled on until I came to Hyde Park; and, overcome by the violence of my mental conflicts, I sat down upon a bench, and gazed around me. Having rested a little while, I rose to depart, when I perceived at a short distance, a fellow-student of mine at Cambridge, who was of my own year, and on terms of peculiar intimacy. There is no con-

vulsion of the mind more terrible than that caused by the struggle of pride with filial affection: but my mother, pale, sick, and soon to be homeless,—and through me!—arose to my heart, and I accosted him: I stifled every emotion, I stooped to supplication, I asked him for money. He was rejoiced to meet me,—he was most sorry that his account was overdrawn; he refused me! The day went by, and I could not procure the money. I will not attempt to delineate my sensations as I returned to our humble dwelling. The evening was cold and foggy; the black mist and the red light of a few straggling lamps composed a melancholy picture. I arrived at our lodging weary and exhausted. The nurse met me on the landing-place; I knew directly from her manner that something dreadful had come to pass. My mother had been unwell, though not dangerously so, for some days previous; but the excitement of the day had brought on paralysis, and I returned only in time to hear that she was now lying upon the bed of death. The mistress of the house had neglected to procure a surgeon, and the nurse was afraid to leave the bed-side. I hardly understood the purport of her words. ‘O my God!’ I cried, as I rushed down stairs.

“In our days of prosperity, we had been known to a physician of eminence in Saville-Row, and

though I was then a child, I remembered his name. Thither I hastened. When I came to that part of Regent-Street fronting Conduit-Street, I was detained by a crowd of people and carriages: the blood rushed to my brain as I dashed here and there to find a crossing. The faces around me were apparently joyful and happy. I heard voices behind full of laughter and merry thoughts, and hopes of coming delights; and at the same moment I turned and beheld a face which wore a most remarkable likeness to my mother. The thought was fire to me; I almost flung myself beneath the wheels of a cabriolet, as I sprang across the street. Dr. Mornington was out of town. I had one resource yet remaining,—a gentleman residing in Russel-Square, who had attended me in a very severe illness; he was at home, and came with me instantly. We entered the chamber together; it was miserably furnished; and a rushlight, which the nurse held in her hand, cast a sickly and yellow light over the soiled dimity curtains. My mother lay quite motionless, with one arm covering her eyes. I took her hand in mine, but for once it did not return the pressure; it was very cold. I called upon her—she answered not: I had no mother! I did not shed a tear; but I folded my hands together, and knelt down by the bed-side.”

I felt that this painful story would overpower his

exhausted frame; and my anticipations were, alas, too soon realized. Starting up with frantic energy, he cried out, in a voice that thrilled the very heart, "Oh! my God! if, in my days of innocence, when thy secret was 'upon my tabernacle,' I ever offered a sincere prayer at thy shrine, or breathed the thankfulness of a lowly heart, for mercies vouchsafed to me, look down upon me, O blessed Father, and take thy erring child to thy bosom."

Never did I behold so heart-rending a spectacle. He had thrown himself upon his knees, his wasted hands were rigidly clasped in supplication, and his eyes turned upwards in fearful earnestness. As he thus knelt upright in bed, the ravages of sorrow and sickness upon his once noble frame became apparent. I looked in silent grief, until every gleeful hour we had passed together, and all our sweet interchanges of affection came back upon my heart, and the tears rushed into my eyes. Gradually the paroxysm passed away, and as he sank upon the pillow, a placid expression, like that of his earlier days, crept softly over his features. By the light of the moon, which shone mildly into the chamber, I stooped over him. He was quite still—the pulse had ceased to beat—the Lost Student was with his mother!

A GARLAND FOR A WHITE FOREHEAD.

Now if Time knows
That her whose radiant brows
Weave them a Garland of my vows;

Her whose just bays
My future hopes can raise,
A trophy to her present praise;

Her that dares be
What these lines wish to see;—
I seek no further, it is she!

CRASHAW.

THE spirit of mine eyes is faint
With gazing on thy light;
I close my eyelids, but within
Still thou art shining bright.
Glowing softly through the gloom,
Like a flower-bird at night.*

Thy Beauty walketh by my side
In pleasant bower and lea;
I hear thee in the bird that sings
Upon the orange-tree;
Thy face from every crystal stream
Is looking up to me.

- * How delicious were those lines of Cowley:—
Love in her sunny eyes does basking play;
Love walks the pleasant mazes of her hair.

Moonlight sleeps on wood and flower !
From me thy Beauty will not part.
Within my weary lids it dwells,
Beloved ! that thou art.
The sweet breath of thine eyes doth fall *
Like odour on my heart.

DANCING.

OH, Beautiful ! when Venus sprung,
Eve of the waters, into sight,
And round her breast her tresses clung,
A garland of delight:
With lip, and cheek, and eye like thine,
And motion breathing music sweet,
She made the purple sea her shrine,
The white foam, lilies for her feet !

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

SOFTLY tread ! Cythera keeps
Vigil o'er her while she sleeps ;
Voices from Elysium lull
The slumber of the Beautiful !

* This was a favourite conceit of Philostratus ; and has certainly something to recommend it.

See! the dimpled pillow glows
 With her odorous breath of rose ;
 Like the orient May, doth break
 The love-light from her cheek !

Wake her not! enchanted dreams
 A charm upon the sleeper shed !
 Stir not the Garland of sweet Dreams
 Which sleep hath bound upon her head !

WAITING FOR THE BELOVED IN MAY.

MAY's red lips are breathed apart
 By the music of her heart,
 Ever softly stealing thro',
 When the silvery morning dew
 Hangs upon the garden tree,
 Like precious pearls of Araby.

Gladness from her Cave of Cloud
 Upon the brightening earth hath bow'd ;
 Riches flow on bower and lea,
 But I am poor in wanting thee,
 Sweetest May-Queen, Emily!

Hark! along the covert green,
 The softly shaken leaves between,
 I hear thy voice of pleasure ring,
 Thou dear good Angel of the Spring*!
 Richest perfumes, every morn
 Plenty scatters from thy horn.

All things dost thou bring with thee,—
Merry dances, songs of glee ;
Sweet airs to the aching head,
Early flowers to the dead.

Then why, fair May, am I forgot ?
And why dost thou regard me not ?
Shall every garden happy be,
And *my* sweet Flower not come to me !

• The Nightingale.

SIDNEY WALKER AND JOHN MOULTRIE.

Tempora nam licet hic placidis dare libera Musis,
Et totum rapiunt me, mea vita, libri.

Milton ad Carolum Deodatum.

— Let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen on some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato.
Sometimes let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine!—*Il Penseroso.*

MOULTRIE.

How delightful it is in this busy and tumultuous age—this carnival of politics and commerce—to have a Cave to retire into; an Eugeria from whose lips to gather strains of serene beauty and wisdom,—there we can cool that fever of the spirits, which the excitement of the world so often occasions. Every step we take out of the narrow boundaries of the time we live in carries us into a purer atmosphere; and while the sweet air and the unclouded sky of Athens charm our senses into peace, the hoarse contention of this actual life dies away be-

hind us. We forget the Present in the Past ; the Poets, the Philosophers, the Orators of the golden age, arise in all their lustre, and we hang upon the lips of Socrates, or wander through the enchanted Garden of Plato.

What a light has the antique Muse poured into the most desolate chambers. How many hearts has she cheered with her music ; how many consoled by her eloquence and truth ! Various are the ministerings of this gentle spirit. Who has forgotten Ascham's visit to Lady Jane Grey at Brodegate in Leicestershire, where he found her alone reading the *Phædo* of Plato ?

. Though the horn was blown,
And every ear, and every heart was won,
And all in green array were chasing down the sun !

ROGERS.

‘ I wist all their sport in the park,’ she said, ‘ is but a shadow to that pleasure which I find in Plato.’ Thus does the Muse brighten even the cheek of innocence and fortune ; but most lovely is she when bringing flowers to the pillow of the sick and suffering scholar. She loves her children best in the hour of affliction.

When a cloud had fallen upon the eyes of Milton, this faithful Guide, who had known and watched over him in the bowers of Christ's, was

still at his side to lead him through all the flowery valleys of Arcady, and into the glorious assembly in the Academe. He could still sit with Bion under a spreading plane; or listen to the heavy breathings of slumbering Pan; or hear the nightingales, as they sang to Sophocles, among the ivy and violets of Colonos!

WALKER.

The drama of Greece, unlike our own, did not ascend to excellence by slow steps. In tracing the annals of the English Stage, many names arise to the memory before the series closes in Shakspeare. Greene, from one of whose tracts came the *Winter's Tale*; the tender and harmonious Peele; the extravagant, but picturesque Marlow; Lodge, who excelled in touches of pastoral tenderness and beauty, and to whom we probably owe the charming Rosalind of *As You Like It*; not to mention Lyly, who, though deficient in fancy and taste, became the leader of a very popular sect; Kyd, the writer of a tragedy which acquired considerable reputation; and Nash, who, destitute as he was of vigour and scholarship, yet exercised some influence upon the literature of his day. These, with others, had trodden the path of dramatic poetry before the appearance of Shakspeare. But Æschylus stood alone; a sculptor working without a

drawing or a model. What could he pick up from the cart of Thespis?

The drama of Greece was essentially national. Æschylus formed the noble design of shaping some of the terrific legends of his country into tragedies of stately argument; and his greatest work, the *Agamemnon*, is reared in the faintest twilight of romantic history. The prevailing characteristics of his mind were a daring grandeur and force of sentiment. He delighted in the stern, the lofty, and the terrible. His imagination was wild and stormy. Who would have expected to behold BEAUTY rising from such a sea? Yet over his darkest pictures clouds of gold float along. The story of Iphigenia is told with a sweetness of pathos and a picturesque grace, worthy the pen of Sophocles; and the picture of Helen glows with all the richness of her voluptuous charms.

Now as she stood, and her descending veil,
Let down in clouds of saffron, touch'd the ground,
The priests and all the sacrificers round,
All felt the melting beams that came
With softest pity wing'd, shot from her lovely eyes.
Like some imagined pictured maid she stood,
So beauteous look'd she, seeming as she would
Speak, yet still mute; tho' oft her father's halls
Magnificent among,
She, now so mute, had sung

Full many a lovely air,
In maiden beauty fresh and fair:
And with the warbled music of her voice
Made all his joyous bowers still more rejoice.

SYMMONS.

MOULTRIE.

You remember that animated account of the Fire-signals, by which Agamemnon had promised to announce to Clytemnestra the capture of Troy. The watchman, after so many vigils passed in vain expectation, in the midst of a complaining soliloquy, beholds the long-looked-for beacon darting up into the sky. Vossius observes, that without being able to prove the historical truth of this account, such is the geographical accuracy of the poet, that criticism cannot charge him with fiction. If the signals were *not* lighted they *might* have been.

WALKER.

Poetry contains few pictures equal in liveliness and graphic truth to this description. We watch the course of the fire through all its journey—and almost fancy we hear the hissing sound of that ‘beard of flame,’ rushing up from the dry heather. These signals are of great antiquity. They are frequently noticed in Scripture. Fires are still lighted along the mountains in view of Cosseir on the Red Sea, to announce the approach of the

Caravans, travelling from the Nile. Jeremiah, while warning the children of Benjamin to flee from Jerusalem, commands them to *Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem*. Burning torches were employed by the Greeks and Romans as *telegraphs*. Chateaubriand has a pleasant allusion to the beacon-fires, as kindled in Greece at the present day. On arriving at the house of an Albanian, an acquaintance of M. Fauvet, he hastened to an eminence east of the village, to gain a view of the Austrian ship. In the evening a fire was lighted of myrtle and heather, the *spinn* of Æschylus, and a goatherd stationed on the road to inform him without delay of the arrival of the boats from Zea.

I have attempted a translation of this narrative; at least as literal as any of its metrical predecessors :—

'The God of Fire*, on Ida's steep,
Sent forth the living flame:
From watch to watch with giant leap
Along the mountain tops it came,
Unto Lemnos' hill of fame.
Up Athos, where the Spirit dwells†,

* Ηφαίστος.

† Αἶπος Ζηρος. The modern name of Athos is Τραγύιον Όρος; by the European inhabitants of Turkey it is called *Monte Santo*.

The torch of fire doth spring,
Flashing from its lofty track
Along dark Ocean's mighty back,
The red-light of its journeying.
Golden-beaming, like the Sun,

It rushes on its path-way still,
Flashing upon the lifted eyes

Of the watchman on Macistus' hill.
Brief time, I ween, the fire they kept,
Not one upon the watch-tower slept,
On the blazing Signal leapt.

Away, away, the Herald darted,

On clear Euripus' streams it fell:
The night-guard on Messapius started,
He knew the Beacon well.

The Fire knoweth not decay,—

A heap of mountain-heather dry
Casteth up the flame on high,
And it speedeth on its way.

Waxing fiercer in its might,

O'er Asopus' meadows leaping,
Like the radiant moon at night

To Cithæron's ridges sweeping.
It waketh another herald-light,—

And now Gorgopis' lake grew bright;

And, lo! from heather gathered round
Up rusheth, with a hissing sound,
A mighty beard of flame!

Where the rocks with cloudy frown
On the Saronic Gulf look down,

The Signal-fire went by;
 Bounding to the watcher's eye
 Through the darkness, till it came
 Unto the Argive Mountain's crest
 Beside the city, there the flame,
 On Agamemnon's roof had rest.

MOULTRIE.

Potter lost much of the spirit of these lines; his version has a very considerable infusion of the Prosaic. Johnson's opinion of his translation of *Æschylus* is perhaps a little too severe; but never were the features of a great poet reflected more imperfectly than in the poetry of Potter. The Rambler's criticism is very characteristic. After wandering about, says Boswell, I got into a corner with Johnson, Garrick, and Harris. *Garrick to Harris*—'Pray sir, have you read Potter's *Æschylus*?' *Harris*—'Yes; and think it pretty.' *Garrick to Johnson*—'And what think you, sir, of it?' *Johnson*—'I thought what I read of it verbiage; but upon Mr. Harris's recommendation, I will read a play. (*To Mr. Harris*)—Don't prescribe two.'

WALKER.

When I read the *Orestes* and *Hecuba* I cease to wonder why the Greeks called Euripides the most tragic of poets; they display a pathos of

sentiment, a domestic interest of situation, and a dignity of affectionate endurance, which remind me of the tenderest scenes in Massinger or Heywood. The character of Electra is drawn with all the sweetness of those powerful pencils. Her watchings, her sorrows, her unwearied love, her desire to share the guilt with her brother, are affecting and natural features. The scene in which we behold her sitting by the bed of her afflicted brother, is one of the most beautiful in the whole range of dramatic poetry. The following translation is only a fragment. You see the Chorus approaching with gentle step to the couch of the mourner, who has fallen into repose; while Electra, alarmed at the slightest sound, entreats them to tread lightly. Does not this remind you of that charming verse in *The Tempest*.

Pray you tread softly, that the blind mole may not
Hear a foot fall.

Electra. Softly! Softly! fall the sound
Of thy footstep on the ground!
Gently! gently! like the breath
Of a lute song in its death;
Like the sighing of a reed,
Faintly murmuring to be freed.
So softly let thy whispers flow.

Chorus. Listen, Dear! how meek and low!

Electra. Blessings on thy quiet feet!
Hush thy breathing, trembling, SWEET!
Come near to me, tell me why
Damsels, ye are lingering by?
Long hath sorrow torn his breast,
Now his weary eyes have rest.

Chorus. How fares it with him? dearest, say.

Electra. Sad and tearful is my lay.
Breathing on his couch he lieth,
Still he suffers, still he sigheth!

Chorus. What say'st thou, mourner?

Electra. Woe to thee,
If the dewy slumber flee,
That raineth o'er the weeper's eye
The beauty of a calmer sky.

Chorus. See, the clothes his body shaketh;
Electra, look! thy brother waketh!

Electra. Curses on thee, dark and deep!
Thou hast stirred the charm of sleep,
Never more thy voice shall swell—

Chorus. Hush! he sleeps!

Electra. Thou sayest well.

MOULTRIE.

Young has very happily described the hushing
silence of a footstep:

More like a murderer than friend I crept,
With soft suspended step.

The interest of the play concentrates around
Electra. She is the star of that stormy night.

Orestes is only interesting from his deep attachment to his sister, and the entire trustfulness with which he rests upon her arms of love. Beaten down and tormented by the avenging spirits, the orphan feels that only one support remains to him; only one friend to comfort him. Hence his pathetic request to Electra to retire, and recruit her exhausted frame.

Why dost thou weep my sister, folding thus
Thine eye of tears beneath thy garment?
I am ashamed to cover thy young heart
With thy sick brother's grief. Unveil thy face,
Yea, come forth from thy weeping, sister dear!
For when my spirit doth grow dark, thy arm
Must be around me, and thy gentle voice
Speak comfort to me. Let thy tender song
Dwell round my pillow in the gloom, and now
Go close thy weary eyes. If I lose *thee*,
What other voice will talk to me at night?
I am an orphan!

WALKER.

Euripides in this beautiful drama has combined all the elements of dramatic poetry. The scene where

. Staring Orestes flies
With eyes flung back upon his mother's ghost—
might have been struck out by the fiery mind of
Æschylus. As a whole the Drama is inferior to

the *Hecuba*; and the model of friendship which the writer holds up in the characters of Pylades and Orestes, is defaced by the circumstance of their being bad men. But with all its defects it was a wonderful production for a man in his sixty-eighth year. The *Hecuba* abounds in passages of touching interest; I indulged my fancy, the other day, in what I suppose I must call a paraphrase of that tender scene, in which the captive queen bewails her degraded condition, and anticipates fresh misfortunes to her children. Although not strictly literal, the tone and manner are, I hope, retained.

Lead me, damsels, to the door,
A captive now, a queen no more!
With you linked in the bond of shame;
Uplift, support, my tottering frame!
Maiden, link thy hand in mine,
Let my weak arm lean on thine!
And I with staff of age will guide
My trembling footsteps at your side.
Fire of heaven; sable Night!
Wherefore in the shadowy light,
Do visions, like the stormy gleams
Of Horror, break upon my dreams!
It was, it was, my daughter fair,—
I knew her face, her golden hair—
Ah, me! whose shriek rings on the air?
Powers of Earth! be reconciled!
The mother prayeth for her child!

For him—the apple of her eye—
Who dwelleth 'neath the Thracian sky,
The anchor of his family!
Ah me! a weeping voice to-morrow
Will come unto the child of sorrow;
My heart with boding fears doth swell,
It knows the voice of grief too well!
Oh, that my heavy eyes could trace
The future on Cassandra's face.
I saw a white fawn dappled o'er,
But its breast was stained with gore;
It flew for shelter unto me—
The red-wolf tore it from my knee!
The Phantom-warrior on his tomb*
Hath cried aloud. Oh, voice of doom!
Terrible the whisper ran,
From lip to lip, from man to man.
The cry of blood comes deep and wild—
Father of Heaven! my child! my child!

MOULTRIE.

Scaliger was willing to surrender for Ennius alone, Lucan, Statius, Silius Italicus, *et tous ces garçons-là*†. I should be very happy to exchange them all for the lost works of Simonides, who seems to have carried Elegiac poetry to perfection. In simplicity, pathos, and purity of style, his remains testify that he was admirable. Take his affecting poem on the Vanity of Life,—which, following your

* Achilles.

† Prima Scaligerana.

example, I have thus *overturned* into English, with great freedom.

Nothing long with man abideth,—
Thus the Chian prophet sung;
Like the leaves upon a tree,
Green and faded, so is he,
Withered soon as he hath sprung.

Who hath said unto his spirit,
I will take this lowly seat?
Hope sings to him, and his eye
Looketh to a brighter sky,
A fairer garden for his feet.

In the pleasant light of morn,
Man riseth like a tender flower,
Perfuming some woodland spot;
The evening comes, and finds him not—
Blooming, dying in an hour!

Doth the young heart, chaunting gaily
In the Summer's orient light,
Think its song will ere grow old,
Or its sunny face be rolled
In the garment of the night!

Treasure these things in thy bosom,
Pilgrim-child of joy and tears;
Waiting for a home more blest,
Where thy weary feet shall rest
At the boundary-stone of years!

There is one circumstance in the history of Simonides deserving particular notice; he is said to have been the first poet who received money for his writings. The reason he assigned for his conduct is at once satisfactory and conclusive. ‘I had rather,’ were his words, ‘leave something to my enemies after my death, than need any assistance from my friends while living.’ How well he must have known the world !

WALKER.

The charms you admire in Simonides, flourish with equal vigour in the poems of Homer. Pope, was one day reading to an old lady a canto of Spenser, and she remarked upon his concluding, that he had been showing her a gallery of pictures. There is something, added the poet, in Spenser, that pleases one as strongly in one’s old age, as it did in one’s youth. I read the *Fairy Queen* when I was about twelve, with infinite delight, and I think it gave me as much when I read it over about a year or two ago. This criticism is not less true of the Homeric Poems; you are delighted in both with the same freshness and sincerity; the same dignity and simplicity of character. Homer’s gallery of pictures differs, indeed, from Spenser’s in subject; but we continue to gaze upon them

with the same pleasure through every succeeding year. Time, that destroys so many works of art, only seems to mellow their colouring. Perhaps the *Odyssey* is, on the whole, though far inferior to the *Iliad* in fire of imagination, the more delightful composition; its moral is of a more domestic and touching character. The picture of a man tossed about in numberless trials, and subjected to so many and various temptations, yet in all preserving undecayed and unblemished, the love of home and of his family, to which his heart unceasingly yearns, is full of interest of the deepest order*.

MOULTRIE.

Whoever was the author of the *Iliad*, his imagination was imbued with the grandeur of eastern song. His Impersonations often breathe all the ardour of the Bible Poetry. How magnificent is the advance of Apollo to the battle. The shield, as Cowper happily renders it, is tempestuous. By the Greeks and all the Oriental nations, the brightness of the eyes and of the features was regarded as a supernatural sign. The emerald eyes of their gods shone with mysterious splendour through the gloom of the Adytum. Availing themselves of this prevalent belief, im-

* *De Jove Homeri Dissertatio*, by Dr. C. G. Eckenbrecher.

postors have sought to deceive men by an assumed lustre of countenance.

Dr. Leyden tells us, that Ibn Makna, the founder of the Maknayah sect, hid himself from the public gaze, and covered his features with a veil; asserting that no eye could endure the glory of his countenance. To support this deception, he prepared some burning mirrors, placing them in such a situation that the rays fell upon the faces of those who approached him. Having taken these precautions, he uncovered his face, and directing his votaries to draw nigh, the foremost were struck by the burning rays, and retired, exclaiming,—‘We cannot look upon him, but he gazes upon us.’

WALKER.

Many tender and beautiful things have been said of eyes; yet how inferior to the sweet things uttered by themselves! A full eye seems to have been esteemed the most expressive. Such was the eye that enchained the soul of Pericles; Homer celebrates the ‘ox-eyed Juno.’ Sir William Jones thought the two words in Turkish signifying *fawn-like* eyes, corresponded with the Greek *αλιωνπις*. In the first book of the Iliad, this epithet is applied to the daughter of Calchas. Mahomet tempts the Faithful with a promise of Houris, whose eyes are

as large as eggs; and an Arabic poet compares them to polished mirrors. The eyes of the beloved one are likened in the Song of Solomon, as rendered in the Vulgate, to the eyes of doves; but in the Septuagint, the eyes are the doves themselves. The Indian poets have a very pretty comparison of a girl's eyes changing with various feelings to a pair of water-birds, with azure plumage. A singular coincidence of fancy may be traced between the eastern poetry and the conceits of Philostratus. 'Thou declarest that her abode is in thine eye, and when thou closest it in thy heart,' says an Arabic ode. 'How often have I opened mine eyes, that thou mayest depart,' says the Greek Euphuist.

MOULTRIE.

In all great poets you perceive a facility and versatility of manner. Milton's *Eve* is not less perfect than his *Satan*; nor Shakspeare's *Titania* than *Othello*; nor Homer's *Helen* than *Achilles*. He sketches a toilet with all the spriteliness of the *Rape of the Lock*. How delicious is the picture of Juno arraying herself in her charms, in order to recover the affections of Jupiter. Might not the charming epithet *ροδοδακτυλος*—*rosy-fingered*, which Homer applies to the morning, have been suggested by the custom among the Grecian and Asiatic women of colouring their nails. Chandler, alluding

to an Athenian girl, says, 'She has bracelets of gold on her wrists, and like Aurora, is rosy-fingered, the tips being painted.' What an interesting light is thrown upon the ancient poetry, by researches into the parallel customs of other nations.

It would sound a very poor compliment now if an epic poet were to characterize his hero by the appellation of 'swift-footed,' which, in the *Iliad*, is so constantly applied to Achilles. But in those days swiftness of foot was a very honourable distinction. In many parts of the world it is so regarded at this day. There is a class of men in South America, who are known by a name signifying *Goers*; and who sometimes accomplish a journey of more than seventy miles in one day. In this manner the Mexicans forwarded their despatches. The speed of the Indian hircarrahs, and the Chinese post-carriers is well known.

WALKER.

It would not be a disagreeable or an unfruitful occupation, to enlarge these coincidences of thought and manners. Such notes often clear up the meaning of an old author, better than anything in the Scholiast. When Ulysses visits the son of Tydeus, in the tenth *Iliad*, he finds him asleep before his tent, in the midst of his soldiers, with their shields beneath their heads, and the spears planted in the

ground by their side. The traveller in Persia meets with the same object at the present day. Such also was the practice of the Jews. *And, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster.*—1 Sam. xxvi. 7.

MOULTRIE.

You may add that curious simile in the second book of the *Iliad*, where the Grecian chiefs, separating and reducing to order their followers scattered over the country, are compared to goatherds, who can distinguish their own flocks from others, even when feeding together promiscuously. This is done constantly by the Hottentots, who recognise the cattle of their masters with unfailing readiness and skill.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY ;

WITH RECORDS OF THE UNION.

Eloquence is a great and diverse thing ; nor did she ever favour any man so much as to become wholly his. He is happy that can arrive to any degree of her grace. But, indeed, I would no more choose a rhetorician for reigning in the schools, than I would a pilot for rowing in a pond.—*Ben Jonson.*

Quid enim dulcius libero et ingenio animo et ad voluptates honestas nato, quam videre plenam semper et frequentem domum concursu splendidissimorum hominum ?—*De Caus. Corrupt. Elog.*

How well I remember reading the admirable letter which Lord Brougham, then member for ———, addressed to Mr. Zachary Macaulay, upon the dawning eloquence of his son, of whose success in the political combats of the Union, he had heard through Lord Howick, at that time a resident member of the University. All who have read the articles upon Demosthenes, in the *Edinburgh Review*, are aware of Lord Brougham's devotion to the Athenian orator. Never, he wrote to Mr. Macaulay, even while addressing the most illiterate audience, did he find himself making greater way,

than when translating from the great Liberator of Greece. So universal is the language of the heart in all ages. Upon the works of Demosthenes, therefore, he urged the youthful scholar to bestow all his diligence; to take him for his model; and, neglecting the more refined sophistries and poetical imagery of Cicero, to practise his genius in the sterner exercises of simplicity and truth. Not that this system of Rhetoric was to be elaborated with greater ease than the flowery style of the Latin School. He was never to speak without ample preparation, nor, if possible, without committing the whole harangue to memory. Lord Brougham, must in this instance, be supposed to have given advice which he did not always follow. No person, who beheld him in the House of Commons during the morning of his strength, when his arrows rattled against the golden shield of Canning, could believe for a moment that those brilliant dashes of fiery sarcasm and invective were sharpened under the lamp. Yet it may, perhaps, be objected, that this very fluency was the result of practice; that his memory, trained in many conflicts, was always ready to supply him with new weapons.

From whatever cause the defect originates, Mr. Macaulay, it is well known, hardly ever succeeded in a reply. He seems to want what Mr. Moore has so happily called the art of thinking upon his

legs. There are men, whose eloquence is far more copious than their reading, and who never shine so much as when they are surprised into a speech. Among these, the late member for Leeds was certainly not found. With his literary and political style, if I may so distinguish them, every reader of the *Debates*, and the *Edinburgh Review*, is sufficiently acquainted. His articles on Dryden, Milton, and Macchiavelli, contain some splendid specimens of declamatory rhetoric. But for grace and facility, for a touching truth and fervour of manner, I prefer some of his early essays in Knight's *Quarterly Magazine*. His eloquence, after all, whispers more of Tully, than of his Grecian Master; every page declares the toil lavished upon its embellishment. It glitters with barbaric pearl and gold; the diction is rich and varied, though too highly wrought and artificial, and continually forcing a conviction upon the mind, that the thoughts are inferior to the setting; that the grapes would be of a finer flavour, if the vine were boldly pruned. These remarks are hazarded only in reference to his later and more finished productions. The specimens of a student's oratory at Cambridge, are not to be judged by so high a standard. The Union,—a word requiring no explanation to any member of the University—reached an elevation in those days, which it is not likely soon to recover. Macaulay,

with his flashes of vigorous imagination; Praed, with his graceful irony and poetical fancy; and many others, whose names live in the memory of their companions, imparted an unusual charm to its meetings. It concerns not the reader to know how far my political creed differs from Mr. Macaulay's; yet I cannot refrain from observing, that the character of Strafford is too severely delineated; and that while rendering to Milton the honour due to the purest *intentions* of patriotism, we ought not to forget the injury which his mistaken opinions have inflicted, or how many designs of most hurtful tendency to the welfare of the state, have been sheltered under the shield of that lustrous name.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

“OF all the remarkable characters of English history, Cromwell has, I think, met with the most unmeasured judgments. He has been viewed only through the glass of powerful prejudice, and his mental aspect has darkened into terror, or relaxed into beauty, according to the feelings of the beholder. He has been the delight and the scourge,

the glory and the disgrace of the world. Voltaire pronounced him an usurper worthy to reign; Mazarine called him a fortunate fool; Clarendon stigmatized him as a brave, bad man; South saw in him a lively copy of Jeroboam. By one party he was regarded as the Champion of liberty, making a passage for the people of God through the armies of the enemy and the principalities of darkness; by the other, as a master of hypocrisy, a bigoted enthusiast, an evil angel of the Apostacy. The voice of hatred has deepened over his ashes. Calumny, Sir, possesses in an uncommon degree, the property of adhesion; the longer it remains, the harder it becomes; until, in the course of time, the colour of the moral countenance, the very shape and expression of the features, are incrustated and defaced by this leprous pollution. I stand not here, Sir, to night, as the advocate, or the panegyrist of that melancholy domestic tragedy, which was presented before this afflicted nation in that tempestuous season. But, Sir, I would ask—was there no provocation, no exaction; no insult to the dignity of man; no invasion of the sanctity of a Briton's fireside! Sir, the grave of Hampden has a voice; let it answer for me! Tyranny had dashed its mailed hand upon the mouth of every freeman; the life-blood of the laws was drained out by unnumbered wounds. Despotism had up-

lifted its standard; the hearts of men failed for fear. At this dark and dreary period, all eyes turned to the star of Cromwell, which then began to show itself above the horizon. By many of the most eminent men, of an age fruitful in the highest qualities of the intellect, he was hailed as the servant of Providence, chosen to conduct the agitated kingdom into a happy and honourable repose.

“Milton regarded him as the tutelar divinity of the national freedom, as the incorruptible Priest of a new Hierarchy; a chieftain, who was to rule the empire by his wisdom, to recall the popular mind to a severer and purer discipline, to vanquish and trample to death under his feet every pleasure and temptation; to bear himself, in short, as one whose meditations were sanctified and ennobled by a peculiar intercourse with his Maker. His first exploits he declared had been against himself; his first victories over his own appetite. Thus had he from his youth been knitting an armour for his soul; and thus enthusiastically did one of the brightest Intellects of the age welcome the dawn of what he thought would shine into a glorious morning*. No wonder that Cromwell disappointed such ardent expectations. Never was the founder of a political dynasty placed in a situation of more imminent

* See Milton's *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*.

peril. The voice of disaffection resounded in the camp. On one side were gathered the Anabaptists, with Harrison, once the staunchest and most intrepid friend of the Protector; on the other side lay the Royalists, ever ready to spring upon the usurper. The political Argus needed all his hundred eyes. Even in his chamber the sword hung over his head. But Cromwell possessed, in an eminent degree, that crowning quality of a soldier and a politician—decision of character. His sudden dissolution of the Parliament, in the January of 1655, was a master-blow of policy. By that single stroke he severed the head of the Opposition, and left it only a paralyzed and powerless body. It was well remarked by Warburton, that Cromwell is distinguished from other enslavers of their country; *they* vanquished it when sunk in luxury and pleasure; *he*, when every village swarmed with eager and undaunted champions. *They* crept upon her overcome with the weariness of voluptuous riot; *he* chained her awake and in perfect vigour. The shadow of his name was not confined to England. ‘He had no sooner made himself sovereign,’ said one who spoke with authority, though with something of hyperbolical praise, ‘than all the kings of the earth prostrated themselves before him.’ Mazarine flattered his ambassador, while the exiled Charles was treated with contempt; Spain congra-

tulated him ; Holland struck a medal in his honour ; Sweden stretched out her arms to him ; Italy, says Burnet, trembled at his name ; the pride of the Osmanlis' bowed before him. For the sufferings of the church during the period of puritanical domination no heart bleeds more than mine. But let the saying of Montesquieu be remembered,—every religion which is persecuted, becomes itself persecuting ; for the moment when by any accidental change of fortune it rises from the persecution, it attacks the religion from which that persecution came ; not as a religion, but as a tyranny. It was not so much against the church, as against the intemperate zeal of her servants, that the fury of the people burst forth. Of the real sentiments of the Protector, it would be idle to attempt an examination in this place. It was the opinion of Baxter, who had the best means of forming a correct judgment, that at one period of his life, at least, he was sincere. But, sir, I believe that a thirst for *personal* aggrandizement never yet accompanied true religion. The Christian aims at power—if he aim at it at all—not for his own sake but for others. Cromwell might, at some seasons, have been influenced by religious feelings ; but the great Idol of his heart was Ambition ; this, like the Ur of the Chaldeans, devoured all the rest. The greatness of his character every one must admit. The drama in which he played so terrible

a part closed as it opened. Cromwell on his death-bed was the Cromwell of Marston-Moor. The eyes of the dying man rested with feverish anxiety upon that Pillar of Renown, which he had erected at such a fearful cost. His last dreams were of glory; his last thoughts upon the opinions of Posterity."

LORD STRAFFORD.

"Who ever dashed himself with a more reckless madness from the golden pinnacles of a high and noble fortune, than this Apostate from the Commonwealth of England? He appears to have been in politics what his friend Laud was in religion; equally impetuous, equally haughty, equally careless of consequences. The Strafford Letters might be called the Confessions of a Tyrant. There we see the qualities of his mind depicted as clearly as the dark pencil of Vandyke has written them upon canvass. This overbearing arrogance was the characteristic of his associates; and they became its first victims. They despised the lawyers, and the Church fell by the Law. The phantastic apparitions of Prynne and of Eliot*, from which they

* See the Strafford Letters.

thought it the meanest folly in the world to start aside, were among the most terrible appearances that glared upon them in their night of danger and of death.

“Strafford was the victim of a pusillanimous master. What a subject for an historical picture is furnished by the visit of the Secretary Carleton to the chamber of this unfortunate minister, for the purpose of communicating to him the king’s signature of the bill. His incredulity, his confidence in the promise of the monarch, and then his final conviction of his Master’s weakness; his uplifted eyes, his hand upon his heart, and that indignant exclamation of scorn and sorrow, *Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the sons of men, for in them there is no salvation.* Here are hints for a painter, if, indeed, his trial do not offer a still more inspiring theme. The power of his mind and the invincible strength of his courage, supported him to the end. During seventeen days, under all the depression of sickness, and in the midst of relentless and triumphant enemies, he continued to defend himself with undaunted valour.

“Sir John Denham, in his noble verses, has worthily recorded this heroic and affecting behaviour.

While single he stood forth, and seemed although
Each had an army, as an equal foe,
Such was his force of eloquence, to make
The hearers more concerned than he that spake:
Each seemed to act that part he came to see,
And none was more a looker-on than he;
So did he move our passions, some were known
To wish for the defence, the crime, their own.
Now private pity strove with public hate,
Reason with rage, and eloquence with fate.

“Thus much I have felt myself bound to declare respecting this extraordinary individual. Would that I could love his character as I admire his genius! But I have done. Far from me, and from this assembly, be the impious bigotry which delights to dig up the skeletons of the departed, only to mutilate and insult them. Never—never—shall the rabid fierceness of polemical hatred cheer me on to such a desecration of the grave; never—never—will I forget what I owe to the cause of truth, and the sanctity of our Faith. I will strip the dead of nothing but their arms.”

THE POLITICAL CHARACTER OF MILTON.

“ No, Sir, Milton was not a democrat ; let not his venerable name be uplifted like a banner before the dissolute rush of revolutionary madness ; let not that harp which discoursed of things beyond the eye of sense, be woke to hymn the march of every crowd of disaffected citizens.—If ever a man was impelled by pure and disinterested patriotism to advocate a particular course of policy, Milton was that individual. He was not a ‘ displeaser, or molester ’ of the world, from any personal or ambitious motive. When God, he said, commands to take up the trumpet, and blow a jarring or dolorous blast, it lies not in man’s will what he shall say, or what he shall conceal. This was the reason he gave for his attacks upon the Episcopacy. It was to appease the restless calls of Conscience, that he armed himself for the combat with a mighty hierarchy. In all his bitter outpourings of intemperate zeal, the yearning of his heart after purer and better things is visible. He longs to return to the calm and pleasing solitariness of gentle thoughts, to the beauty of the Pierian Shade. The politics of Milton were poetry put into action ; night and day, the idea of a perfect and faultless state haunted his

imagination. Hence his rapturous praise of every attempt to ennoble the condition, or to exalt the feelings and aspirations of his fellow men. Hence the ardour with which he embraced the republican cause. With their leaders he maintained no intimacy; he demanded from them no patronage. When he saw them falling away from their high professions, deceiving the hopes of a sorrowful nation,—whose voice was uplifted louder against them? who unmasked their treachery with a fiercer hand? who inveighed with sterner indignation against the plunderers, who, called from shops and warehouses, fell to huckster the Commonwealth? He had emptied the quiver of his wrath upon the Prelacy; and the same bow was strung against its enemies, when, instead of devoting themselves to a single cure, they set sail, as he complained, to all winds that might blow gain into their covetous bosoms. A Commonwealth, he affirmed, ought to be but as one huge Christian personage; one mighty growth and stature of an honest man, as vigorous and compact in virtue as in body. Not to be tossed about by a multiplicity of interests; but to be governed by one heart; to be regulated by one pulse. The political honesty and devotion of Milton, rest not alone upon the weak flourishes of a rhetorician. His *Defence of the People of England* was written, as

it were, under the shadow of that night which afterwards fell upon him. He was the martyr of his own enthusiasm. But he did not faint or murmur; and when, after a lapse of three years, we find him mentioning the loss of sight to his friend Cyriac Skinner, it is with no expression of sorrow or despair at his lot; no repining at the dispensation of Heaven. He does not bate a jot of heart or hope, but presses forward to the high goal of the race which is before him. Hear the strain of sublime philosophy as it flows from his own lips:—

Cyriac, this three years day, these eyes tho' clear
 To outward view of blemish or of spot,
 Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot,
 Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
 Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
 Or man, or woman; yet, I argue not
 Against heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
 Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
 Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
 The conscience, Friend, to have lost them overply'd
 In liberty's defence, my noble task,
 Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
 This thought might lead me thro' the world's vain
 mask,
 Content tho' blind, had I no better guide!

“It is, Sir, the fate of men to err, and even Milton was not exempt from the failings of mor-

talities. But it becomes us while lamenting the violence and fierceness of his indignation, to remember the disinterested purity and grandeur of his motives; to look back upon the tumult and clamour of those stormy days; and, above all, to judge with impartiality. If we have no other offering for his tomb, let us, at least, sacrifice our prejudices to the Manes of this immortal poet—this sincere and dignified Believer!”

EDWARD LYTTON BULWER

AND

T. M.

A. When we were at Cambridge together, do you remember how the young pedants of our time were wont to consider that all intellect consisted in puzzling, or setting down each other?

L. Ay, they thought us very poor souls, I fancy, for being early wise and ridiculing what they thought so fine.

The New Phædo.

BULWER.

How insignificant modern literature becomes when compared with the works of those illustrious men who wrote only from an overruling impulse to instruct the world, and were content to live laborious days for a future and immortal reward. Therefore are their brows crowned with the undying amaranth, and their tombs visited by a thousand hearts. The constant estimation of every pursuit, by the emolument to be derived from it, is one of the most marked features of this degraded age—one of those hideous *seams* that mar the beauty of the time.—Every day witnesses the desolating spread of an Utilitarian spirit, which, not satisfied with banishing poetry from our Commonwealth, would con-

demn all the heroic desires of the soul to a like ostracism. By these men life is regarded as a great field to be ploughed and sown, rather than a garden for the nurture of tender plants. They would drive the share over Collins, and bury the Faëry Queen. Thus learning and intellect, like the Genii of the Arabian Lamp, are only invoked to minister to our luxury and extravagance. Those pilgrimages which the memory was wont to make into ancient lands, are degraded into journeys of barter and commerce. And who can wonder, when we think more of the equipment than of the knight; more of the garment than of the heart that beats under it. The leper, Poverty, is driven out of the city. Our Paganism is more senseless than that of old; for they knelt before a serpent and a block of wood, yet never bowed the knee to money. And as we are told that the philosopher's stone will not be found by one who seeks it unworthily; so we may be certain that the fruits of learning will never be gathered by a low and grovelling student. It will be well for us to reflect how few works, "or worthy of praise or memory, but came out of poor cradles." The Latin Inscription, carved by the finger of the infant Selden, still remains on the lintel of his paternal cottage at Salvington, to mark the lowly home of the illustrious scholar. Well might Livy call Poverty the mother of Virtue. It

was a toil-worn hand that rocked to sleep the little cares of Latimer and Taylor.

T. M.

After all, how much more blest than the purple Conqueror is that Innocence which can lay its head upon a stone and dream of angels! The world, alas! is too much with us; we are of our age, not above it! No literary Avenger returns into his century, to purify and cleanse it from its harlotries and corruptions. We go on, pitiable victims of habit! wooing mental debility with an unblushing forehead; the nerves of our literature are relaxed and powerless,—our refinement has drivelled into effeminacy. Poetry, which Milton regarded as the final end of all study, the monument to be cast out of the collected treasures of a life, has dwindled into a stream “of rolling tautologies.” Our intellect seems to have shrunk with our books.

BULWER.

If we transport ourselves into the company of those eminent men who adorn our earlier literature, how amazed we are at their various erudition, their inexhaustible eloquence, their rare sagacity, their invincible perseverance. What considerate diligence, what midnight watchings, what expense

of Palladian oil*, are displayed in every page of More, of Donne, and of Taylor! Their divining Wands discovered treasures amid forgotten ruins; from every choked up stream of human knowledge their industry recovered something precious. While the Memory, by night and day, was thus heaping the altar of the Beautiful with costly offerings,—and the thoughts, ever busy in their sacred work, brought in gold, and ivory, and cedar; how majestically the Intellectual Temple rose in the religious silence of a serene and contented spirit! It is not one of the least evils attending the diffusion of authorship amongst us, that we read to *write*, not to *think*. Our ancestors composed books to fortify and ennoble the mind,—with us, these are secondary motives; our object is answered, if they sell. How far is this from the true spirit of learning, which ought to place its best reward in the acquirement of wisdom, and the instruction of man. But why should I attempt to illustrate the ends of knowledge, when the words of one of the greatest characters that ever shed a lustre over science are in the remembrance of all? “Men have entered into a desire of learning and knowledge, sometimes upon a natural curiosity and inquisitive appetite; sometimes to entertain their minds with variety and delight; sometimes for

* Milton.

ornament and reputation ; and sometimes to enable them to victory of wit and contradiction ; and most times for lucre and profession ; and seldom sincerely to give a true account of their gift of reason to the benefit and use of man, as if there were sought in knowledge a couch whereupon to rest a searching and restless spirit, or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down, with a fair prospect ; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon ; or a fort or commanding ground for strife or contention ; or a shop for profit or sale, —and not a rich storehouse, for the glory of the Creator, and the relief of man's estate*." In the same pure and noble strain, Milton spoke, not of the mercenary crew of false pretenders to learning, but the free and ingenuous sort of such as evidently were born to study, and love learning for itself and not for lucre, or any other end, but the service of God and of truth.

T. M.

The spirit of the age is a great tyrant, and even the proudest authors must be content to follow at its chariot-wheels. Any attempt to divert the current of the popular taste generally ends in the defeat of the adventurer ; we must sail with the tide, or not at all. I have heard that on the ap-

* Bacon.

pearance of Mr. Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*, only three copies found purchasers. The early poems of Milton obtained no attention from his contemporaries; even Cowley's ear seems to have been closed to their music. Collins sank unknown into a premature grave. A literary law-giver will never be received with open arms; he ought, therefore, to mail himself for the contest. He who cannot resist detraction, is unfit to struggle in the world. Men are ingenious and enthusiastic in degrading; slow and unwilling to praise*. It is only after repeated attempts to throw their opponent without success, that they submit to acknowledge the conqueror. The goal will often be missed by the fleetest runner,—in life, it is not *swiftness*, but *doubling*, that wins the race.

BULWER.

But let not our own age bear all the obloquy. History furnishes us with a striking instance in the learned Cudworth. In that wonderful work, which will carry his name into remotest time, he launched out, said Warburton, into the immensity of the Intellectual System, and at his first essay penetrated the darkest recesses of antiquity, to strip Atheism of all its disguises, and drag the lurking

* Sir Egerton Brydges' *Anti-Critic*, (Seventy-five copies,) p. 63.

monster to conviction. Yet calumny tried her arrows even upon him; enemies found Atheism in a book expressly devoted to its overthrow. A report so grateful to the envious and the ignorant, who comprise no inconsiderable portion of mankind, soon crept into wider circulation; the author felt himself deeply injured; the enthusiasm which had supported him through so much of his painful task rapidly declined, and the world lost the remainder of *The Intellectual System of the Universe*.

T. M.

Fuller proposed to apportion an hour's meditation to an hour's reading; a practice which he justly thought made a man master of his learning, and *dispirited* the book into the scholar. Now this habit of reflection is precisely the quality we are most deficient in. Never was the appetite for knowledge so strong, or so widely diffused, and never did our literature wear a more sickly or famished aspect. The symptoms of a confirmed atrophy are seen in every feature. The mental repose which promotes digestion, in the moral system not less than the physical, and imparts a peculiar efficacy to our nourishment, is enjoyed by few in this feverish day of excitement. In vain we seek to fly from the crowd; in vain, like the wood-

dove, we sail away upon the wings of contemplation, to a more profound repose in bower or glen. The steam-engine—that mute Intelligence—which man has created for himself, reaches us with its mighty arms, whether we wander with Buckhurst in the glades of Knowle, or dream with Sidney under the oaks of Penshurst. In former times, many circumstances combined to perfect that happy tranquillity which is the atmosphere most congenial to thoughtful and imaginative studies. The land, to employ a phrase of Sir Philip Sidney, was strewn with a faint quietness for poets. The population, divided into a multitude of separate families, was united by the bonds of mutual necessities. The politics of a village were bounded by its hedges. Ministers fell, favourites dropped off, parliaments were dissolved, without creating so much sensation as a dance round the May-pole. I mention the fact as propitious to meditation, without asserting its advantage in a general sense.

How then would you distinguish the century in which our lot has fallen, or has it no particular physiognomy?

BULWER.

Oh, yes! Every age has its own characteristics. In the sixteenth century, imagination; under James, eloquence and learning; at the Restoration, wit,

festivity, and fancy; during the reign of Anne, polished and didactic harmony. Ours is *smartness*. I am laying out of the argument all individual exceptions, of which there are many. We are overrun by cleverness; that ingenious faculty which performs every little exploit easily. We are inimitable in dandling the kid; nothing can exceed our carvings upon cherry-stones—for their size! One shower of frivolous works follows another; it is the only Series to which there is no Finis. But whether it be that the soil is exhausted by its early harvest, or that the ardent draughts of excitement, frequently swallowed, stop our growth, I know not; but it is too evident that, like some of our literary ancestors, as described by Ben Jonson, we make a Wit-Stand at twenty. Many of us never rise another inch. Something of this may be owing to our education. Lord Herbert, of Cherbury, when only twelve years old, challenged the students of Oxford to a logical disputation; and Sir Thomas More, hardly past his youth, lectured a numerous audience upon Augustine's celebrated treatise *De Civitate Dei*. To be acquainted with the names of such compositions is now a very scholarlike accomplishment. But I weary you.

T. M.

Far from it. I was only thinking of that delicious

quiet of which we have been talking. From how many lips has a prayer gone up for this delightful peacefulness, and never more sincerely than from Cowley's. It makes me melancholy to reflect upon so many of the best days of his too brief life consumed in business, so touchingly called by himself, the contradiction of his fate,—in decyphering correspondence, and in political negotiations. We should execrate Cromwell for driving him from Trinity, but for those charming Essays which his contempt of the world drew from him at Chertsey. After being caressed by the learned, trusted by the powerful, beloved by the virtuous,—on looking back, in the autumn of his days, over all the various scenes through which he had passed, what was his opinion of man? Take it warm from his own heart* ; “ Man is to man all kinds of beasts,—a fawning dog, a roaring lion, a thieving fox, a robbing wolf, a dissembling crocodile, a treacherous, decoy, and a rapacious vulture. The civilist, methinks, of all nations, are those whom we account the most barbarous ; there is some moderation and good-nature in the Toupinambaltians, who eat no men but their enemies, whilst we learned and polite Christian Europeans, like so many pikes and sharks, prey upon every thing we can swallow.” He concludes his attack with an exhortation. If by any

* *The Dangers of an honest Man in much Company.*

lawful vocation, or just necessity, men happen to be married to the world, he whispers in their ear the advice of St. Paul,—*Brethren, the time is short; it remains that they that have wives, be as though they had none.* In all cases they must be sure to retain the headship and authority over it. He does not forbid us to salute the world, if she happen to come in our way,—he only warns us from courting her as a mistress. I think it may justly be objected to Cowley, that he looked upon man only with the eyes of the moralist, not of the Christian; that he forgot the *probationary* character of our sojourn. Individual advantage can rarely be consulted without endangering some higher claims. Nor let me be thought to speak with a sectarian narrowness of sentiment, for

True religion sprung from God above
Is, like her fountain, full of charity,
Embracing all things with a tender love,
Full of good-will and meek expectancy,
Full of true justice, and sure verity,
In heart and voice; free, large, even infinite,
Not wedg'd in strait particularity,
But grasping all in her vast active spright,
Bright lamp of God! that men would joy in thy pure
light.

HENRY MORE.

BULWER.

Cowley's plan of retirement is interesting and poetic; and such a mode of life may possibly be less open to temptation than any other. But, alas, few days glide by in which the best men have not some idle words or vainer thoughts, to sully "the fair whiteness of their souls." Some new pleasure is ever striving to win us to its arms, from which we escape only to find ourselves shorn of our noblest qualities. Various are the forms and disguises under which the Destroyer creeps upon its victim. Sometimes it crushes him in a sudden grasp; but is ordinarily contented to climb up, as it were, on the shoulders of its fellow, whenever a seasonable opportunity may occur. For one sin is always ready to hold out a helping hand to its brother. So in the ancient warfare, Death crept along the stooped shoulders of a legion, until it sprang from that ladder of shields into the affrighted citadel.

Every one, says a writer whom you are fond of quoting, is planted in the world that he may grow in the world; and as venomous plants delight in the shade, so a sullen retiring argues a sullen and venomous disposition. Surely virtue, however excellent she be in the dangerless Academy of Plato, shines still more nobly when she walketh with

intrepid heart through the battles of Marathon, Pharsalia, Poitiers, and Agincourt*.

The arena where the race is to be run is, indeed, hot and dusty, full of strife and contention; for envy and malice are always ready, with violence and clamour, to molest the candidate for the Immortal Garland. But it does not become us, on that account, to slink out of it, as Milton indignantly exclaims, without the wound of a single dart upon our armour. For consider how the danger enhances the reward. So he, whom a kindred genius called our "sage serious Spenser," conducts Guyon through the Cave of Mammon and the Bower of Bliss, that Temperance might be ennobled by the trials through which it passed, and come pure and spotless out of every temptation.

T. M.

The great difficulty in our intercourse with the world, is to know how far to go, and when to stop; what sacrifices to make, and what to decline. The worshippers of Moloch commenced their adoration with a cake of flour, and finished them with driving a tender infant through the flames. Our practice is not dissimilar. We too often begin with the tribute of some unimportant habit or amusement, and conclude by laying our soul upon the altar.

* Milton.

Thus, it has been said*, we sin by degrees, and go down to ruin step by step; until the atoms swell into a heap, and we perish by trifling instances, and, as the son of Sirach declared, by little and little. For the wanderer may arrive at the gate of everlasting death by a narrow and bye-path, as well as by the broad and beaten road.

But, after all, little reliance is to be placed upon any outward defences. Sin can leap over the loftiest bulwark as lightly as over a hedge of roses. Our great protection must be looked for in the grace of God, and the careful culture of our time. A portion of every day ought to be set apart for prayer and meditation—a little spot of ground enclosed for a garden of sweet flowers, to refresh and to heal. Into this paradise, while a watchful purity keeps the gate, the serpent will never glide.

The passage you have taken from Donne admits of another interpretation. Every man, indeed, is planted in the world, that he may grow in the world; but as in the vegetable world different trees require different soils, so in the moral; and the tree which would have perished in the unhealthy atmosphere of a town, may grow into beauty under a purer sky. How often has the voice, whose tones might have fallen unheeded in the senate, or the courtly chamber, cheered the drooping spirits

* By Jeremy Taylor.

of a sequestered village, and caused the plough to rest for an hour, while it explained, in simple and affectionate language, the good tidings of the Gospel. Such was the seclusion of the gentle Herbert, the judicious Hooker, and the amiable poet of Weston. Nor less beautiful is the spirit of religious philosophy and meekness that breathes a sabbath-quiet over those beloved abodes by the smooth Greta, on Rydal Mount, and the sweet garden of Brem-hill. Thrice happy Bards! for whom Memory weaves a posy, that no sharpness of the wintry air, no blight of popular envy, can ever destroy,—and to which every day adds another flower of fresher hues, and richer perfume.

GRAY AND MASON.

A SUMMER DAY WITH THE MUSES.

But hail, ye mighty masters of the lay!
 Nature's true sons, the friends of man and truth!
 Whose song sublimely sweet, serenely gay,
 Amused my childhood and inform'd my youth.
 O let your spirit still my bosom sooth,
 Inspire my dreams and my wild wanderings guide;
 Your voice each rugged path of life can smooth,
 For well I know wherever ye reside,
 There harmony, and peace, and innocence abide!

BEATTIE.

MASON.

THEN the bees did not settle round your cradle?

GRAY.

No,—the first dawning of poetical feeling that I can remember, was when I began to read Virgil, at Eton, out of school-hours for my own amusement. I had previously studied him chiefly with a view to his language, for I was fond of writing Latin verses. Jacob Bryant, who sat next to me, and who was already esteemed a youthful prodigy, always repeated with praise a couplet from one

of those compositions, suggested by a passage in the *Spectator*—I think it ran thus:—

. Pluvieque loquaces
Descendère jugis, et garrulus ingruit imber.

Virgil's ear must have had all the delicacy of Spenser's; there are two verses in the fourth *Georgic* unrivalled for sweetness,—

Te dulcis conjux, te solo in littore secum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat.

Thus you see I was not half so precocious as West, who, while at Eton, used to versify in his sleep.

MASON.

Alas, you seem now equally to have forsaken poetry and poets.

GRAY.

It is over with our History*, but I am rejoiced to find the subject taken up by a scholar and a man of taste. Hurd, sent to me the other day, requesting me to furnish Mr. Warton with any fragments or sketches of our abandoned design. I fear my contribution will be a very insignificant one. However, though we no longer intend to write about poets, we can talk of them.

* Alluding to the History of Poetry which he at one period proposed to write in conjunction with his friend Mason.

M

MASON.

We should need many long Summer days, from morn till dewy eve, to rescue these pearls from the covetous sands. The Sea of Time is restless and encroaching; the wave of each returning hour washes away some fragments from the venerable fabrics of departed genius. Certainly the reader of modern song, knows little of those fragrant flowers that blossom around the overgrown and forgotten fountains of our early poetry.

GRAY.

A very pretty flight of flowery extravagance, only requiring to be translated into prose to become perfect. It will, indeed, to pursue your own image, be very agreeable to wander with curious feet through the green and sequestered paths of this unfrequented Garden; and the more so, as we shall not be obliged to stray from our sofa; with me, a very important consideration. The task will be hardly less delightful than reading a new novel of Crebillon; particularly in this

Chamber deaf to noise and blind to light*.

Let us endeavour to pronounce correct, rather than pretty criticisms. In the Grecian Games,

* Sir Philip Sidney.

officers were appointed to examine the statues of the victors, and to reduce or destroy all that exceeded the proper elevation. The duty of a true critic resembles theirs. In walking through the Temple of Fame, he ought not only to replace the statues which years have impaired or prejudice removed; but to throw down and break to pieces, every one that owes its place to adventitious popularity, or to any cause save natural merit. We will admit none who have proclaimed themselves poets by the sound of the trumpet.

MASON.

With whom shall we begin?

GRAY.

With him who first led poetry from those rough and thorny seats where she lay hid for so many years, into the pure, open, and flowery light. Need I add the name of Chaucer. I have taken the liberty of applying Ben Jonson's account of philosophy to the history of our poetry. Before Chaucer there is nothing to reward the imagination; that dark age belongs only to the student of our language and antiquities. We will leave Mr. Warton to luxuriate over the origin of rhyme among the Franks, Saxons, and Provençaux,—and to compare and unravel, the verse-romances, the

madrigals, the sestines, &c. The scholar will ever draw his first draught of pure English from the well of Chaucer. Lydgate says with truth, that he

. . . . Made first to distylle and rayne
The gold dew droppys of speche and eloquence
Into our tongue through his excellence.

You may find in his works the originals of the hepta and octo-syllabic measures, afterwards refined by Milton, in his lyric poems, into perfect harmony; and of that grander heroic, which under the skilful toil of Dryden and of Pope, assumed a dignity, combined with a variety and sweetness not to be surpassed. Dante regarded it, both from the gravity of the rhythm, and its general *capacity*, as the fit vehicle for the highest themes*. The full merit of Chaucer's versification is only now beginning to be felt. Yet I am not inclined to admit Dryden's insensibility to its music. There is the rude sweetness, he writes, of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. In this little sentence he seems to convey a very just idea of the matter. The occasional ruggedness and negligence of the author are not without charms; for the continuity even of sweetness grows unpleasing.

* Tam temporis occupatione, quam capacitate sententiæ, constructionis et vocabulorum, &c.—*De Vulgari Eloquentia*, Lib. ii., c. 5.

But whatever doubts may be entertained regarding his appreciation of Chaucer's metrical skill, his admiration of the liveliness and truth of his manner cannot be questioned. The *Canterbury Tales* possess the twofold advantage of poems and stories; they have the fancy and embellishments of the first; the graphic sketches of the second. He does not, as Daniel unjustly objected to Spenser, paint shadows, or even bodies, but *minds*. Each pilgrim is distinguished by his peculiar physiognomy, moral, as well as physical. Pope used to call him the first tale-teller in the true enlivened natural way; and Dryden declared that he had them all before him, with their humours, dresses, and faces, as distinctly as if he had supped with them at the Tabard. So have I, and I often behold the company of twenty-nine, winding out of the gate of Pembroke, in long array, on their journey to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket. You may catch a glimpse of them now from yonder window.—There is the Prioress, perfectly conversant with the French language, as taught at “the scole of Stratford atte Bowe;” the Monk with his head shining like glass, his sleeves embroidered with costly fur, and his hood fastened with a golden clasp; the Friar lisping out of wantonness,

To make his English swete upon the tongue.

the pleasant Oxford Clerk with more logic than money, and more simplicity than either, full of learning and "high sentence,"—the good Wife of Bath with her hosen

. Of fine scarlet rede,
Ful streite yteyed, and shoon ful moist and new:

and the Poor Parson, a most delightful character, "rich of holy thought and werk;"—Don't you see them?

MASON.

Perfectly well.

GRAY.

If we would write well, that is naturally, we cannot become too familiar with this English Homer. Dryden says, that Spenser more than once insinuates, that the soul of Chaucer was transfused into his body; a remark sufficiently characteristic to be true, although I have not discovered such an expression in his works. No stronger proof of the vitiated taste of Cowley can be offered, than his dislike of Chaucer, whom he "read over," at the request of the Earl of Leicester. Dryden suggests, that the courtly poet, shocked at his rough and antique style, never searched into his good sense. He had not the curiosity to force his way into a garden through a few brambles.

MASON.

Chaucer's morning scenes are peculiarly sweet and lively. You feel that the poet rose with the lark, and made the lamb his curfew. He never over-lays his descriptions with what Aristotle called λαμπρά λαξίς. They glow only with the light of Nature.

GRAY.

Chaucer was to the fourteenth, what Spenser was to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. No path in the history of our poetry is so beaten as the one to this Fountain. But these gleams of early sunshine died with him; and the dreary gloom that succeeded, was deepened by the remembrance of the vernal promise so quickly faded. Nevertheless, the seeds were in the ground to spring up and ripen after many Summers. Chaucer bestowed upon Gower, the title of "Moral Gower," and the most inquiring critic could find no epithet more descriptive of his mind. He appears to have been an amiable man, imbued with the massive learning of his age, which he pours out in an unceasing stream of sententious gravity. Pope said rightly, that there was little worth reading in him, though I much doubt his acquaintance with the *Confessio Amantis*.

MASON.

You think him inferior to Lydgate?

GRAY.

Infinitely.—Lydgate had fancy and feeling, and is not wanting in melody. He was born in Suffolk, in a town of the same name, as he informs us in the epilogue to the *Fall of Princes**.

Born in a village which is called Lydgate
By oldè time, a famous castel town,
In Danes' time it was beate down,
Time what St. Edmund's martyr, maid and king,
Was slain at Oxford, recorde of writing.

We know, also, that he was a monk of the Benedictine Monastery at St. Edmund's Bury. He must have been, at least, thirty years old when Chaucer died.

In reading the works of Lydgate, you are annoyed by that tedious and protracted form of narrative, which is the characteristic of the early poetry of every nation, as, indeed, it is of the uneducated in all ages. A story, he said, could not be plainly told, when "constrained under words few."

These oakes great be not down yhewe
First at a stroke.

Certainly the thousand little touches with which a lively gossip heightens her tale, impart an air of

* See Gray's remarks on Lydgate, in Mathias' edition of his works.

familiar truth and sincerity; and, indeed, *circumstance*, skilfully introduced, constitutes a principal charm in the greatest poems. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are full of it. Hector taking off his helmet to allay the terror of his child, who turned away its little face in alarm, is a beautiful example. Virgil, by whom all the artifices of thought and diction were exhausted, avails himself of this aid continually. Take the following picture of Troilus transfixed in his chariot by the spear of Achilles:—

Parte alia fugiens amissis Troilus armis,
Infelix puer, atque impar congressus Achilli,
Fertur equis, curruque hæret resupinus inani,
Lora tenens tamen; huic cervixque comæque tra-
huntur.

Per terram, et versa pulvis inscribitur hastâ.

The trailing of the spear along the sand, in the last line, brings the whole scene before us. Lydgate often carries his descriptions home to the heart in this manner; so does Chaucer, as in Cresseide weeping with dishevelled hair for the departure of Troilus,—and in those vivid verses, where we see the fire leap out from the helmets, beneath the strokes of the combatants:—

Among the tuftes brode, bright and shene,
Of foyle of gold, of feathers white and grene.

MASON.

Shakspeare, before whom the Muse never wore a veil, understood the full power of circumstance ; nor could a hundred pages of description have brought the desolate husband and father on the stage half so vividly as that single exclamation of Rosse :—

What man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows.

A very pathetic scene of this kind occurs in Warner's great poem, *Albion's England*, where the mother, Conuvenna, attempts to reconcile two angry brothers, by recalling to their remembrance her early care and watchfulness over their infancy. And again, in the story of Daphles, the daughter of King Aganippus, who having vanquished a nobleman in arms against her dominion, becomes enamoured of the captive, whom she visits in his dungeon.

But entering, when her eyes beheld the image of her
heart,
To her still peerless, tho' his bands had alter'd him in
part ;
She, casting down her bashful eyes, stood senseless then
a space,
Yet what her tongueless love adjourn'd, was extant in
her face.

GRAY.

The two last verses are admirable.

MASON.

Probably you will think the following account of boys pursuing a squirrel inferior to Warner; but the minute circumstances of the detail are excellently touched. It comes from the *Pastorals* of William Browne.

Then, as a nimble squirrel from the wood,
Ranging the hedges for his filberd-food,
Sits partly on a bough, his brown nuts cracking,
And from the shell the sweet white kernel taking,
Till (with their crooks and bags,) a sort of boys
(To share with him) come with so great a noise,
That he is forced to leave a nut nigh broke,
And for his life, leap to a neighbour oak ;
Thence to a beech, thence to a row of ashes ;
Whilst thro' the quagmire and red-water plashes,
The boys run dabbling through thick and thin ;
One tears his hose, another breaks his shin ;
This torn and tattered, hath with much ado
Got by the briars ; and that hath lost his shoe ;
This drops his band ; that headlong falls for haste ;
Another cries behind for being last :
With sticks and stones, and many a sounding hollow,
The little fool, with no small sport, they follow.

Britannia's Pastorals, Song 5.

There is not a school-boy within a hundred miles of Trumpington-street, who would not recognise

this homely sketch. You hear the hedges break down beneath the impetuous rout, and their echoing shouts, and the sobs of that urchin who,—and this is the most graphic touch of all—

Cries behind for being last.

GRAY.

Your learning has led you some distance from the Benedictine monastery. Let us try to find our way back to Lydgate.

MASON.

There is a beautiful passage in May's poem upon Rosamond, of whose charms Daniel speaks in that exquisite line—

Framing thine eye the star of thy ill-fate.

It deserves praise for its general merits; but I only mention it now to quote the pleasing lines in which, by a very natural circumstance, he portrays the melancholy of the rustic youth, who chanced to behold the fair recluse of Woodstock—

What now, alas, can wake, or fair avail
His love-sick mind? No Whitsun-ale can please,
No jingling Morris-dances give him ease;
The pipe and tabor have no sound at all,
Nor to the May-pole can his measures call;
Although invited by the merriest lasses,
How little for these former joys he passes?
But sits at home with folded arms.

GRAY.

You ought to edit an anthology,—Mason's Garland would sound prettily. But to return to Lydgate. The following scene refers to Carnace, who, having been condemned to death, sends this testimony of her dying love to her guilty brother, Macareus :—

Out of her swoonè when she did abbraide,
Knowing no mean but death in her distresse,
To her brother full piteouslie she said :
“ Cause of my sorrow, roote of my heavinesse,
That whilom were source of my gladnesse,
When both our joys by will were so disposed,
Under one key our hearts to be enclosed.

This is mine end, I may it not astart ;
O, brother mine, there is no more to say ;
Lowly beseeching with all mine whole heart,
For to remember specially I pray,
If it befall my little son to die,
That thou may'st after some mind on us have,
Suffer us both be buried in one grave.
I hold him straitly tween my armès twain,
Thou and Nature laidè on me this charge ;
He guiltless, mustè with me suffer paine :
And sith thou art at freedom and at large,
Let kindness our love not so discharge,
But have a mind, wherever that thou be,
Once on a day upon my child and me.

On thee and me dependeth the trespass
 Touching our guilt and our great offence;
 But, welaway! most àngelik of face,
 Our childè, young in his pure innocence,
 Shall again right suffer death's violence,
 Tender of limb, God wot, full guiltless,
 The goodly fair that lieth here speechless.
 A mouth he has, but wordis hath he none;
 Cannot complain, alas! for none outràge,
 Nor grutcheth not, but lies here all alone,
 Still as a lamb, most weak of his visage;
 What heart of steel could do to him damage,
 Or suffer him die, beholding the manere
 And look benigne of his twain eyen clere.

B. i., fol. 39.

Mark with what consummate art the pathos of the concluding lines is worked up; *the look benigne of his twain eyen clere*, is deliciously descriptive of infantine innocence and trustfulness. Here, too, you trace a pen of great tenderness. She is writing her letter.

. Awhapped all in drede,
 In her right hand her pen ygan to quake,
 And a sharp sword to make her heartè bleed,
 In her left hand her father hath her take,
 And most her sorrow was for her child's sake.
 Upon whose face in her arm sleepyng
 Full many a tear she wept in cōmplāyning.

It is in these soft touches of pensiveness and simplicity that Lydgate excels; in sublimity, force, and

the distinctness of his bolder images, he follows Chaucer at a great distance. He never glares upon our eyes with those dashes of a tempestuous pencil, that strike gleams of supernatural light over the pictures of the poet of Woodstock. We see no temple

. Of Mars Armipotent,
Wrought all of burnished steel.

No statue of the God of War, while

A wolf there stood before him, at his feet,
With eyen red, and of a man he eat.

No banner, unspreading its “glistering folds.”—His greatness is the result of many separate touches; of what we will call the *cumulative* art of poetry; as in the striking portrait of the Deity.

God hath a thousand handès to chastysè,
A thousand dartès of punición,
A thousand bowès made in uncouth wyse,
A thousand arblastès bent in his doungeon*,
Ordeind each for castigacïon.

Here the magnitude is composed of units,—individually they are nothing; but the effect of the whole is imposing.

MASON.

Did Lydgate influence his age?

* Castle or Palace.

GRAY.

In a small degree. Every stream nourishes some shallower brook—every writer, however humble his talents, draws some one after him. At the commencement of the sixteenth century, about 1517, appeared the *Pastime of Pleasure*, by Stephen Hawes, a friend, I think, of Lydgate, whom he calls his Master, the original of all his learning, and the model of his compositions. But we shall lose nothing by hurrying along with our eyes closed until we reach Sackville,—beyond all comparison the truest poet between Chaucer and Spenser. Pope thought his *Gorboduc* written in a purer style than some of the earlier plays of Shakspeare. He was of the School of Dante, whom he resembles in the severity and grandeur of his imagination. The poet represents himself wandering into the fields, when the wintry snow has beaten down the flowers, and covered the earth with gloom. In his walk he meets with Sorrow, who conducts him to the abode of the unhappy dead. The figures with which he peoples “The dark Avernè,” are delineated with surprising vigour. Who could fail to recognise Care.

Greedy Care still brushing up the breres,
His knuckles knob'd, his flesh deep dented in,
With tawed hands, and hard y-tanned skin.

The picture of Dread is the finest personification in the language. There is something very bold in the conception of Old Age,

His wither'd fist still knocking at Death's door.

And of Sleep :

By him lay heavy Sleep, the cousin of Death,
Flat on the ground, and still as any stone*.

You have the original of a very familiar image in these lines upon the fleeting nature of Wealth.

Which comes and goes more faster than we see
The flickering flame that with the fire is wrought.

MASON.

I suppose you place the accomplished Earl of Surrey in the second Italian School.

GRAY.

His compositions are slight and few in number ; but their influence upon our literature was deeply felt. He was our earliest writer of blank-verse, and to him we owe the introduction of the Sonnet and the ternal rhyme of Dante ; a measure employed by Milton in the second Psalm, and from its

* Keats has transferred this description—whether with acknowledgment or not, I cannot say,—to Saturn, who sits *still as any stone*.

solemnity and dignity peculiarly appropriated to sacred poetry. I fall in with the common error, in attributing the invention of the *Terza Rima* to Dante; because there is extant, a composition by his master, Brunetto Latini, in this very metre. The fancy of Surrey was tinged with the romance of his Italian models. He very gracefully describes the delights of the Tennis-Court, with the surrounding seats thronged by high-born beauties, whose bright eyes rained influence:—

With dazed eyes we oft by gleams of love
Have miss'd the ball.

This is natural and tender, and not unlike the gallantry of Petrarch.

MASON.

Your imagination kindles as the *Fairy Queen* begins to dawn upon you.

GRAY.

I cannot speak of Spenser without affection. I revere Milton, but I love Spenser, and never sit down to compose a verse, without first refreshing my fancy with his works; they soothe my mind into contemplation like a strain of soft music. I will not try my pencil upon a face whose lineaments have been so often drawn; but I would say to

every youthful student of poetry, in the words of Shakspeare:—

Dost thou love pictures? we will fetch thee strait
Adonis painted by a running brook,
And Cytherea all in sedges hid,
Which seem to move and wanton with her breath,
Even as the waving sedges play with wind.

Taming of the Shrew; Act i., Sc. 4.

With what astonishment did my eye glance for the first time over Addison's contemptuous criticism of the *Fairy Queen*; not knowing that he never read Spenser until fifteen years afterwards. It must have been in a similar spirit of adventurous ignorance, that he blamed Chaucer for want of humour. No poet ever imbued his country's literature so deeply as Spenser: you catch the echo of his lute in Drayton, Fairfax, Fletcher, Browne, and many others, until it died away for a season in the early poems of Milton. The magnetic power of Genius not only attracts other minds, but imparts to those minds, in an inferior degree, the power of attracting others in their turn. But from that chief Stone at the head of the series, comes the virtue operating through them all*. Whatever of beauty you meet with in the imitators of Spenser, is inspired by their Master.

* See Plato's curious and interesting dialogue, *The Io*.

MASON.

. Many a heavy look
Follow'd sweet Spenser.

Britannia's Pastorals.

He could not be mourned by a more congenial spirit; and if accident had not deprived us of Browne's *Lives of the English Poets*, we should probably have possessed a more complete history of your favourite bard than we are ever likely to obtain. Browne did not sing in vain. His little stream of pastoral sweetness may be seen running through a considerable portion of the poetry of the seventeenth century. Milton disdained not to drink of it. His fancy was picturesque and tender; and his ear susceptible of the finest harmony. The picture of Satyrs, reminds me of the learned pencil of Poussin:—

. . . . One of those who by the mossy banks
Of rushing Helicon, in airy ranks
Tread roundelays upon the silver sands,
While shaggy Satyrs tripping o'er the strands
Stand still at gaze.

The flutter of the leaves is prettily described:—

And as the year hath first his jocund Spring,
Wherein the leaves to birds sweet carolling
Dance with the wind .

His similes are lively and natural:—

As some way-faring man, passing a wood
(Whose waving top hath long a sea-mark stood,)
Goes jogging on, and in his mind nought hath
But how the primrose finely strews the path,
Or sweetest violets lay down their heads
At some tree's root.

GRAY.

Browne belongs to a class of writers whose influence is felt rather than seen: village brooks, whose course you trace by the greenness they diffuse. Drayton and Daniel deserve similar praise; though their intellectual powers were of a higher grade. In all Drayton's lighter poems you recognize the scholar of Spenser,—his *Quest of Cynthia* for the play of fancy, the mirthfulness of manner, and the dance of the numbers, may be compared with Cowley's *Chronicle*. Daniel's principal charm is the wonderful purity of his diction; he will always be "well-languaged Daniel." You cannot study him too attentively; for a model more simple or idiomatic it would be vain to inquire. The following sonnet is elegant and musical; the ninth line rises into beauty.

I must not grieve, my love, whose eyes would read
Lines of delight whereon her youth might smile;
Flowers have time before they come to seed,
And she is young, and now must sport the while.

And sport, sweet maid, in season of these years,
And learn to gather flowers before they wither ;
And where the sweetest blossom first appears,
Let love and youth conduct thy pleasures thither.
Lighten forth smiles to clear the clouded air,
And calm the tempest which my sighs do raise,
Pity and smiles do best become the fair ;
Pity and smiles must only yield thee praise.
Make me to say, when all my griefs are gone,
Happy the heart that sigh'd for such an one.

And the next:—

TO SLEEP.

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my anguish and restore the light
With dark forgetting of my care, return—
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-advised youth ;
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torments of the night's untruth.
Cease dreams, the images of day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow ;
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain,
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

MASON.

Daniel justly prided himself upon his sonnets;
Drayton, although inferior to his friend in the con-

struction of this difficult poem, sometimes attained to great excellence. The images of Faith and Innocence in the following lines have a monumental repose,—and the scene itself offers a beautiful design to the sculptor:—

Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes*.

If this fine description had been applied to the death-bed of a Christian, it would have been perfect: of how much graceful poetry has that ponderous *Poly-Olbion* deprived us; notwithstanding the gleams of fancy that play over its pages, they are scarcely less difficult to penetrate than Storer's *Life of Wolsey*.

GRAY.

Before you sneer at Storer, try and beat these verses:—

I am that tomb where that affection lies
That was the closet where it living kept:
Yet wise men say affection never dies;
No, but it turns, and when it long hath slept,
Looks heavy like the eye that long hath wept.

* How pretty and fanciful is the description of Queen Isabella's hand:

So white, so soft, so delicate, so sleek,
As she had worn a lily for a glove.

Depend upon it, *Caractacus** contains nothing so good.

MASON.

Whom do you regard as the earliest English writer of a philosophic poem?

GRAY.

Sir John Davies, in his *Nosce Teipsum*, the most perfect specimen of didactic reasoning in verse, before Pope. No one can read it without being struck by the rare economy of phrase, the strong yet finely wrought texture of the thoughts, and the extraordinary condensation of the language. When I speak of economy, I mean *the economy of wealth*. Davies had none of the indolence of a dreamer; all his imagery is intelligible. See by what a novel comparison, accurately worked out, he illustrates Sensitive Memory.

Here Sense's apprehension end doth take,
As when a stone is into water cast,
One circle doth another circle make,
Till the last circle touch the bank at last.

Jeremy Taylor, whose reading extended over the circle of literature and the sciences, appears to have had this stanza in his mind, while writing the

* Mason's well-known Tragedy.

following passage in the *Great Exemplar*, where the image is applied with great ingenuity. He is discoursing of the grace of God. "But as a stone," he says, "thrown into a river first moves the water, and disturbs its surface into a circle, and then its own force wafts the neighbouring drops into a larger figure by its proper weight; so is the grace of God the first principle of our spiritual motion, and when it moves us into its own figure, and hath actuated and ennobled our natural powers by the influence of that first incentive, we continue the motion and enlarge the progress. But as the circle on the face of the water grows weaker, till it hath smoothed itself into a natural and even current, unless the force be renewed or continued; so do all our natural endeavours, when first set on work by God's preventing grace, decline to the imperfection of its own kind, unless the same force be made energetical and operative, by the continuation and renewing of the same supernatural influence*." The description of Feeling is equally admirable:—

Much like a subtle spider which doth sit
In middle of her web which spreadeth wide;
If ought do touch the utmost thread of it,
She feels it instantly on every side.

* Considerations upon the Epiphany.

These lines will remind you of a couplet, in which Pope with wonderful skill has improved and condensed the metaphor.

MASON.

Do you pass over Lord Brooke.

GRAY.

I instanced Sir John Davies as the author of our first philosophical poem, properly so called, though I doubt whether in dignity of sentiment and thoughtfulness of temper, he always equals the friend of Sidney. But the merits of Brooke are not poetical; his grave wisdom, his penetrating sagacity, his anatomy of the moral feelings, are too stern to be moulded into the delicacies of metre; his versification, however, harmonizes with his thoughts; deep, sounding, and not unmusical. But you must read him for the truths he enunciates; and not for their embellishments. His account of Superstition accords with the history of all ages:—

Which natural disease of mortal wit
Begets our magic and our star-divines,
Wizards, impostors, visions stand by it;
For what fear comprehends not, it inclines
To make a god whose nature it believes,
Much more inclined to punish than relieve.

In another line, he speaks of fear looking into the heart "with dim eyes." Lord Brooke possessed the masculine common sense, and energy of intellect, which form the happiest features of Dryden's poetical character. When he speaks of—

That manly discipline of doing well,
I seem to hear the poet of *Absalom and Achitophel*.

MASON.

The reign of James the First would furnish a delightful chapter to our literary history.

GRAY.

Jonson was its great poetical ornament. Often while passing along Lincoln's-Inn Fields, has a vision of the poet, with a trowel in one hand and a Horace in the other, risen before me*. Let those critics who accuse his genius of heaviness, read one of his Masques. Many are acquainted with this species of composition only in the *Comus* of Milton; but some of the sweetest strains in the language, survive in the neglected verses of Decker and Chapman, whom Jonson regarded as his only rival. The melody of his versification is frequently

* Ben Jonson, said Pope, was found reading Horace by the great Camden, and it was he who sent him to the University of Cambridge.

delicious; his Muse glides along, like her who led
“the Idalian brawls,”

As if the wind, not she did walk,
Nor prest a flower, nor bow'd a stalk.

Next to Milton, Jonson is the most learned of all our poets. He was ever recovering some precious relic from what Cowley called the drowned lands of antiquity. His *Catiline* is a wonderful specimen of classical acquirements. Every page is inlaid with fragments from the ancient authors. But his imitations are not servile or languid; he invaded authors, was the noble saying of Dryden, like a conqueror, and what would have been theft in another man, was victory in him. He gave a more healthy tone to our literature. Clarendon, who in his younger days, while studying for the bar, frequently met Jonson, has recorded the “severity of his nature and manners,” and the reformation which he introduced not only upon the stage, but “into English poetry itself.”

MASON.

How delightful to have passed an evening with his friend, Lord Falkland, at his pleasant seat near Oxford, where he rejoiced to gather around him the most eminent men of the age. In that learned retreat, Chillingworth composed his celebrated work

on Popery, and there too, frequently came the poet Sandys, from the residence of his sister at Caswell, near Witney, where he spent many of those quiet days which gilded the evening of his innocent life, according to his own touching narrative,

Blest with a healthful age, a quiet mind
Content with little.

full of gratitude to God, who had safely guided him during a long and perilous pilgrimage, and finally brought him back to that mother earth, on which his eyes had first opened, and on whose bosom he had always prayed to fall asleep. No contemporary name in English history has acquired an interest equal to Falkland's. He was the Sidney of his age, and will live for ever in the eloquent and affectionate eulogy of his friend Clarendon. His poetical merits were certainly small, though the verses prefixed to the Divine Poems of Sandys, contain some harmonious and spirited lines. But he was the lover, as well as the loved, of Poets. Ben Jonson, Waller, and Cowley, who formed an acquaintance with him at Oxford, awoke their lyres in his praise. And even the witty and licentious Muse of Sir John Suckling, mentioned his name with honour. His death crowned the romantic beauty of his life, and taught us to blend our

reverence of the patriot, with our admiration of the scholar. Falkland was one of those choice spirits whose festivities at the Mermaid, Herrick has celebrated with kindred enthusiasm.

GRAY.

We are unjust to Herrick if we view him only in the light of a mirthful lyrist. Sad and solemn thoughts are continually creeping over his fancy, and seem to have led him almost involuntarily to moralize his song. In his brightest landscape you see a tomb in the distance. He introduces the thought of death even into a love-song.

You are the Queen, all flowers among,
And die, you must fair maid, ere long,
As he, the Maker of this song.

The lines to Primroses wet with morning dew, are inexpressibly sweet and tender,—so is the address to the Daffodils.

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the setting day
Has run
But to the Even Song;
And having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

MASON.

Bishop Taylor has an allusion, somewhat similar, to the decline of day: "And if a man were but of a day's life, it is well if he lasts till Even-Song, and then, says his Compline, an hour before the time*."

GRAY.

One of the best lines in my Hymn to Adversity,

And leave us leisure to be good,

is imitated from Oldham, whose early death—for he was taken away in his thirtieth year—is to be deeply deplored. He possessed a liveliness of invention, a vigour of expression, and a nervous freedom of versification, that maturer years would have ripened into a very high order of satire. Pope complained with propriety that his strong rage was too much like Billingsgate; but by what obliquity of critical vision he could prefer the feeble rhymes of Rochester and the Earl of Dorset, I am unable to understand. Point out to me, in the writings of those witty noblemen, such verses as the following:

Age just crawling on the verge of life.

* Of Contentedness. *Holy Living and Dying*, cap. 2, sect. 6.

Or the process of composition in a poetic mind :

When at first search I traverse o'er my mind,
None but a dark and empty void I find:
Some little hints at length, like sparks break thence,
And glimmering thoughts just dawning into sense.

Is not the last admirable? There is something
pretty in the sketch of a relenting beauty.

Her looks, with anger rough erewhile,
Sunk in the dimples of a calmer smile.

MASON.

Yes, but very far behind the lines you quoted
the other day from Aulus Gellius:—"Sigilla in
Mento impressa Amoris digitulo vestigio demon-
strant mollitudinem."

GRAY.

He calls the delights of common life,
Pleasures which enter at the waking eyes.
Speaking of a person near death, he says with great
ingenuity,

The slackened string of life run down.
His description of eloquent music, that
Can call the listening soul into the ear,
was not unworthy of his friend Dryden's noble ode
upon a similar subject*.

* For St. Cecilia's Day.

You will not, after these few specimens of Oldham's talents*, wonder at Dryden's eloquent eulogy; an eulogy, so warm with the heart of true friendship and admiration, and so glowing with the brightest poetry, that I never read it without delight. It sweeps over the mind like the solemn dirge of an organ.

Farewell, too little and too lately known,
Whom I began to think and call my own;
For sure our souls were near allied; and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorr'd alike.

O early ripe! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more!
It might (what nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.

* Some of Oldham's *conceits* are very pretty. Mr. Moore has rhymed a worse compliment than the following, addressed to Madame L. E.

In that white snow which overspreads your skin
We trace the whiter soul that dwells within.

He beseeches Destiny,

. To twine
All her smooth fortunes in a silken line.

In his verses to the memory of Charles Worwent, he says,
So gentle was thy pilgrimage beneath,
Time's unheard feet scarce make less noise,
Or the soft journey which a planet goes.

But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
 Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.
 A noble error, and but seldom made,
 When poets are by too much strength betrayed.
 Thy generous fruits, though gather'd ere their prime,
 Still show'd a quickness; and maturing time
 But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of
 rhyme.

Once more, hail and farewell! farewell you young,
 But ah, too short, Marcellus of our tongue;
 Thy brows with ivy and with laurels bound;
 But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.

That felicitous phrase—a *noble error*—is a translation of the *αμαρτημα συγγρας* of Longinus.

MASON.

A noble tribute.

GRAY.

Admire Dryden, and be blind to all his faults. This was my advice to Beattie. His *Absalom and Achitophel*, and *Theodore and Honoria*, are alone sufficient to elevate him above a host. The soul of the writer glows through his verses, and lives along every line. Those who affirm him to be a giant only upon earth, pronounce an erroneous judgment. The *Flower and the Leaf* is one of the most lively, beautiful, and romantic poems in the language. He has beaten Chaucer at his own weapons. But this remark ought to go into a parenthesis.

MASON.

Satire is a painful study,—

The skill

To strike the vice, but spare the person still—

is a very rare gift. Cartwright claims it for his poetical father, Jonson. But in Oldham, Cleveland, and others of that school, the arrow hits the person oftener than the vice.

GRAY.

Cleveland was justly censured for obtruding new words upon his readers. To express a thought in the harshest form, constituted the charm of his elocution. Dryden drew this distinction between his Satires and Donne's; that the one gives us deep thoughts in common language, though in rough cadence; the other, common thoughts in abstruse words. Some of his conceits must have astonished even his contemporaries. Wishing to describe the various acquirements of Milton's early friend, Edward King, he says, that in him—

Neptune hath got an University.

But a writer of lively fancy, and enriched by considerable learning, must occasionally produce a striking thought; probably you will think the couplet, in which he alludes to the unequalled

charms of a lady, to be of this number. But even this is a conceit,—

She that can strike the best invention dead,
Till baffled Poetry hangs down her head.

MASON.

Was not Davenant —

GRAY.

Do not couple the author of *Gondibert* with Cleveland. You will find more beautiful imagery, more materials for poetical thought in the works of Davenant, than in a hundred volumes of modern rhymes. He abounds in picturesque phrases, the *curiosa felicitas* of a true poet. Faction is called “the hectic fever of a court;” Wrath, the “unquiet child of Pride;” Echo is “the Sentinel of Nature;” Fame “the eternal Chorus,” to declare to posterity illustrious deeds; Sunset, “the faint decays of light.” Sleep is a very unpromising theme for originality, but see how Davenant raises his description :

It loves the cottage, and from court abstains,
It stills the seaman though the storm be high ;
Frees the griev'd captive in his closest chains,
Stops *Want's* loud mouth, and blinds the treacherous
spy.

Any small adventurer in song might have written

the first part; the beginning of the last line stamps the poet. The second book opens with an animated sketch of Verona at daybreak. How solemn and impressive is the flow of the verse!

An amphitheatre which has controll'd
Unheeded conquests of advancing Age,
Winds which have made the trembling world look old,
And the fierce tempest of the Gothic rage.

This great Flaminius did in youth erect,
Where cities sat to see whole armies play
Death's serious part

What delights me above all in *Gondibert*, is the thoughtful wisdom, the reflective manner of the writer. His thoughts awaken thoughts.

Well by his precepts may we punish strife,
Whose pity knew that Famine, Plague, and Time,
Are enemies enough to human life,
None need o'ercharge Death's quiver with a crime.

How much philosophy is compressed into this brief sentence,

Truth which slowly follows Fame.

These beauties may not please every taste; some readers do not value gold if they are obliged to dig for it: but *Gondibert* presents other charms. Take a picture of an unfrequented library:

For a deep dust, which Time does softly shed,
Where only Time does come, their covers bear.

Or this most lovely comparison of the difference between the pure harmony of the sacred Scriptures, and the Commentaries written on them—

In these Heaven's holy fire does vainly burn,
Nor warms, nor lights, but is in sparkles spent ;
Where froward Authors with disputes have torn
The Garment, seamless as the firmament.

My own opinion of *Gondibert* was strengthened the other day by a remark of Pope*. He regarded it as an imperfect poem, if viewed as a whole, but admired the uncommon beauty and originality of parts. He seems, however, not to have done justice to the versification of Davenant; who, while borrowing conceits from Donne, adapted them to a far

* Gray would have been pleased with the sentiments of two other kindred spirits. "Davenant," says Mr. Mitford in his excellent *Life of Gray*, "is a poet who approaches nearer to Shakspeare in the beauty of his descriptions, the tenderness of his thoughts, the seriousness of his feeling, and the wildness of his fancy." "The stanzas in the *Gnomica*, (writes Dr. Southey to Sir E. Bridges,) might pass for a fragment of *Gondibert*; they have just that tone of thoughtful feeling which distinguishes that poem above all others, and owing to which (faulty as in many respects it is) I never take it up without deriving fresh pleasure from it, and being always unwilling to lay it aside. A little, I think, he learned from Sir John Davies,—more from Lord Brooke, who is the most thoughtful of all poets. Davenant had less strength of mind or morals (as his conversion to popery proves), but more feeling; with him the vein ended. You trace a little of it in Dryden's earlier poems, but not later."

sweeter strain of music. Donne had no qualifications for a poet, except strong sense, great erudition, and a lively ingenuity, which Dryden has taught us to call wit.

MASON.

Our poetical fathers showed us how to write sweetly, as well as powerfully.

GRAY.

Yet critics persist in regarding Waller as one of the earliest improvers of our language. Mr. Waller, says Atterbury, bound up his thoughts better, and in a cadence more agreeable to the verse he wrote in ; so that wherever the natural stops of that were, he continued the little breakings of the sense so as to fall in with them. But this eulogy claims for him more than his due. His highest praise consists in having reduced our versification to a more perfect *uniformity of melody*. Like Denham, he polished a little ; but he invented nothing. You will find in these verses no charm, either of rhythm or of diction, unknown to their predecessors. The full beauty and majesty of the hexameter had been already drawn out by numerous writers, who flourished at the early part of the seventeenth century. I could show you the very pauses, afterwards introduced by Pope with such success into

his compositions. Indeed, I might support my assertion from a little volume, by Dr. Henry King, which appeared about the middle of that century. His allusion to the happiness of the blest is quite perfect :

Where true joys reign, which like their day shall last ;
Those never clouded, nor that overcast.

I confess there is a natural and unaffected harmony in the poetry of that age, an artlessness of art—often inimitable. King, better known as a divine, enjoyed a picturesque taste. The portrait of youth is very pretty—

When he goes proudly laden with the fruit,
Which health, or strength, or beauty contribute.

So is the thought upon Pygmalion :

Whilst he to gaze and court it was content,
He served as Priest at Beauty's Monument.

The following couplet has the prettiness of Bion :—

And as the Paphian Queen, by her grief's power,
Brought up her dead love's spirit in a flower*

* Let me add in a note the affecting Elegy

ON TWO CHILDREN DYING OF ONE DISEASE,
AND BURIED IN ONE GRAVE.

BROUGHT forth in sorrow, and bred up in care,
Two tender children here entombed are :
One place, one sire, one womb their being gave ;
They had one mortal sickness, and one grave.

MASON.

Quite Grecian.

GRAY

Waller and Denham did not give us better couplets than Cartwright,—rarely so good; their *parts* were not so striking; their *wholes* more harmonious. Pope erred in naming Carew the model of Waller, who had wooed the Muse before the appearance of any composition by his supposed original. From Sandys, whose merits were very great, he borrowed something*.

And tho' they cannot number many years
In their account, yet with their parents' tears
This comfort mingles: tho' their days were few,
They scarcely sin, but never sorrow knew.
So that they well might boast they carried hence
What riper ages lose, their innocence.

You pretty losses, that revive the fate
Which in your mother Death did antedate,
O let my high-swoll'n grief distil on you
The saddest drops of a parental dew:
You ask no other dower than what my eyes
Lay out on your untimely exequies:
When once I have discharged that mournful score,
Heaven hath decreed you ne'er shall cost me more.
Since you release and quit my borrow'd trust,
By taking this inheritance of dust.

* Many poets have acknowledged their obligations to Sandys; none with more generosity than Pope. "I began, writing verses of my own invention further back than I can

MASON.

I admit that with all my admiration of the heroic measure, its stateliness, its music, and its comprehension, I am not insensible of what Daniel* calls those continual cadences, running on with a sound of one nature, and a kind of certainty that satiates and fatigues the ear. You miss the sweet surprises of the various lyric.

GRAY.

Waller seems to have preserved his courtliness to the end of his days. St. Evremond said, that he experienced none of the infirmities of old age, and retained at fourscore, the gallantry and tenderness of his youth. But I look upon his character with no affection. He resembled Prior somewhat in disposition, though not in genius; they were both poets of society, deriving much of their popularity from the liveliness of their conversation, and the fashion and power of their associates. Of such persons, who bustle their way into notice, Petrarch has left a very caustic account in his

well remember. Ogilby's translation of Homer, was one of the first large poems that I read—and it was that great edition with pictures; I was then about eight years old. This led me to Sandys' *Ovid*, which I liked extremely."—These fragments of autobiography are very delightful.

* *Defence of Rhyme*, 1603.

Senilia. But a reputation of this kind is of a perishable character ; the flame dies with the fan.

There is a story current at Cambridge, illustrative of Prior's extempore talents. On his return from France, whither he had gone upon the Queen's business, he paid a visit to the master of his College—St. John's—who retained his seat while the Queen's Envoy was permitted to stand. During his walk to the inn, where he was staying with a friend, he struck off the following epigram :—

I stood, Sir, patient at your feet,
Before your elbow chair,
But make a Bishop's throne your seat,
I'll kneel before you there.

One only thing can keep you down,
For your great soul too mean,
You'd not, to mount a Bishop's throne,
Pay homage to the Queen.

The sting, you see, is not very acute. Prior's forte was humour ; and his *Alma*, with all its defects, is the only poem we have to compare with *Hudibras*, whose author he has praised with great propriety and taste :—

He, consummate Master, knew
When to recede, and where pursue ;
His noble negligences teach,
What others toils despair to reach.

He, perfect dancer, climbs the rope,
And balances your fear and hope :
If after some distinguished leap,
He drops his pole, and seems to slip,
Straight gathering all his active strength,
He rises higher half his length.

His description of infant instruction is very amusing : it is quite a juvenile reminiscence :—

I mentioned different ways of breeding ;
Begin we in our children's reading.
To master John, the English maid
A hornbook gives of ginger-bread,
And that the child may learn the better,
As he can name, he eats the letter.
Proceeding thus with vast delight,
He spells and gnaws, from left to right :
But show a Hebrew's hopeful son
Where we suppose the book begun,
The child would thank you for your kindness,
And read quite backward from our *finis* ;
Devour he learning ne'er so fast,
Great A would be reserved the last.

Canto 2.

Pope only returned the compliment offered to him in *Alma* by plundering it*.

* "Pope," remarks Shenstone, "I think never once mentions Prior ; though Prior speaks so handsomely of Pope in his *Alma*. One might imagine, that the latter, indebted as he was to the former for such numberless beauties, should have

MASON.

Is it superior to the *Spleen* ?

GRAY.

It shows, perhaps, a stronger and richer mind, though neither so playful, nor brightened by so many happy flashes of thought; such as, News "the manna of a day,"—Ambition, "the active lunacy of pride." Critics,—

Those tayl'ring artists for our lays,
Invent cramp'd rules, and with short stays,
Striving fair Nature's shape to hit,
Emaciate sense, before they fit.

These are touches of a very free and vigorous pencil; Greene seems to have learned from Nature, what Prior, with infinite labour, acquired from Art. But some of his smaller poems are perfect; they are written upon a plan, and realize the remark of Dryden, that the sweetest essences should be contained in the smallest glasses. Poems comprising a few stanzas, require peculiar attention.

readily repaid this poetical obligation. This can only be imputed to pride or party cunning. In other words, to some modification of selfishness." But though Pope was silent respecting Prior, in his verses, he freely admitted his merits, declared his willingness to have been the author of *Alma*, and numbered him with the authorities for poetical language.

They are miniatures, whose beauty is to be brought out by repeated strokes. A rapid hand often destroys the features. I can conceive a comedy or tragedy to be written in less time than an ode. For in the drama, the characters, like the scene, are drawn somewhat out of nature; and the exaggeration heightens the effect. Wycherley wrote the *Plain Dealer* in three weeks, and Ben Jonson his admirable *Alchemist* in six. Boileau took more time to point a couplet.

MASON.

Prior failed lamentably in his serious poetry. *Solomon*, the fruit of so much toil and anxiety, has proved a frail memorial of his genius*. No poem within my memory bears such traces of the artist; the versification is elaborated to a degree that becomes painful even in the description of Abra:

And from the golden quiver at her side
Rustles the ebon arrow's feathered pride.

GRAY.

Every man is a parasite to himself; Prior loved what it cost him so many days to accomplish. But I can forgive all its defects for that passage in

* Yet in our day *Solomon* has found a very warm admirer in Hannah More.

which he portrays with equal beauty and truth, the watchful tenderness of Abra :

But oh, how short my interval of woe!
Our griefs how swift ! our remedies how slow !
Another nymph, for so did heaven ordain,
To change the manner, but renew the pain ;
Another nymph, among the many fair
That made my softer hours their solemn care,
Before the rest affected still to stand,
And watched my eye, preventing my command.
Abra was ready, ere I called her name,
And tho' I called another, Abra came !

How could the companion of Chloe arrive at such a sentiment ?

MASON.

And I would except from my censure of his serious poetry, the paraphrase of St. Paul's exhortation to Charity. Some of the lines are exquisite in their religious tenderness.

Charity, decent, modest, easy, kind,
Softens the high, and rears the abject mind ;
Knows with just reins and gentle hand to guide
Betwixt vile shame, and arbitrary pride ;
Not soon provoked, she easily forgives,
And much she suffers, as she much believes.
Soft peace she brings wherever she arrives,
She builds our quiet, as she forms our lives ;

Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
And opens in each heart a little Heaven.

* * * *

Then constant Faith and holy Hope shall die,
One lost in certainty, and one in joy;
Whilst thou, more happy power, fair Charity,
Triumphant sister, greatest of the three;
Thy office and thy nature still the same,
Lasting thy lamp, and unconsumed thy flame,
Shall still survive.
Shalt stand before the Host of Heaven confest,
For ever blessing, and for ever blest!

These affecting strains of Christian hope must have come from a softened heart. Have you read the new poem of Shenstone?

GRAY.

Shenstone was a gentle Elegiac person, inoffensive in poetry and manners. It was said of Voiture that he wrote only to divert parties over their tea; the Bard of the Leasowes seems to have been actuated by a similar motive; with one or two exceptions, his poems might have been scrawled while a Summer shower drove him into his library. But he was amiable, and not destitute of refinement and sensibility; though somewhat of a *petit-mâitre*. He loved showy colours in dress, delighted in

trinkets and perfumes*; designed the patterns for snuff-boxes; played, sung, and painted flowers. His chief antipathies were to cards and dancing. The origin of that well-known verse,

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found,
The warmest welcome at an inn,

is amusing. Shenstone happened, I think in 1750, to visit his old Oxford friend Mr. Whistler. But Friendship like Love flows rarely in a smooth current. Various little occasions of disquiet arose; but the crowning indignity consisted in a ball, upon which his host lavished much trouble and expense. When the ominous hour approached, Shenstone, regardless of many polite hints from Mr. Whistler, continued lolling at his ease, taking snuff, and indulging at intervals in a sharp allusion to the folly of such trifles†. The observation awoke a reply, the dispute waxed warmer every minute, and

* Why, he said, are perfumes so much decried; when a person on his approach diffuses them, does he not revive the idea, which the ancients ever entertained, concerning the descent of superior beings, "veiled in a cloud of fragrance?" This is the most ingenious apology ever offered for the Sir Fopling Flutters of the age.

† Dancing in the rough, he said, is one of the most natural expressions of joy, and coincides with jumping; when it is regulated it is merely, *cum ratione insanire*.

the poet bade adieu to his friend's residence on the following morning. On his arrival at Edgehill, he wrote those lines in a summer-house in the garden ; or, according to another account, on the window of a tavern at Henley*.

MASON.

Probably Shenstone's love of gardening prejudices me in his favour ; I certainly think more favourably of his talents† ; and read with pleasure of his nursing—

* Gray's written opinion of Shenstone may be seen in his *Correspondence*. "Poor Shenstone ! why does he not do better ; he hops round his walks, (like a bird in a string, I suppose,) and is afraid to venture beyond his line. And again, with greater severity, "His whole philosophy consisted in living against his will, in a retirement which his taste had adorned ; but which he only enjoyed when people of note came to see and commend it." With this it may not be uninteresting to compare Shenstone's far more flattering character of Gray. "What shall we say then of Mr. Gray, of manners very delicate, yet possessed of a poetical vein, fraught with the noblest and sublimest images, and of a mind remarkably well stored with the more masculine parts of learning."

† Mason mentions him with kindness in *The English Garden*.

. Nor, Shenstone, thou
Shalt pass without thy meed, thou son of peace,
Who knew'st perchance to harmonize thy shades,
Still softer than thy song ; yet was that song
Nor rude nor inharmonious, when attuned
To pastoral plaint, or tale of slighted love.

Although Shenstone's reputation as a poet almost entirely

..... The flame

On listening Cherwell's osier banks reclined ;

or playing in "Alma's guardian arms." His verses, indeed, want strength and animation ; and, what is most surprising of all, are destitute of any picturesque sketches of scenery.

GRAY.

If he ever walked out of his own grounds, it must have been with his eyes shut.

depends upon his imitation of Spenser, he does not speak of him with much regard. "The plan of the *Fairy Queen*," he says, "appears to me very imperfect. His imagination very extensive, though somewhat less so, perhaps, than is generally allowed ; if one considers the facility of realizing and equipping forth the virtues and vices. His metre has some advantages, though in many respects objectionable. His good-nature is visible through every part of the poem. His conjunction of the Pagan and Christian scheme (as he introduces both acting simultaneously) wholly inexcusable. Much art and judgment are discovered in parts, and but little in the whole. One may entertain some doubt whether the perusal of his monstrous descriptions be not as prejudicial to true taste, as it is advantageous to the extent of imagination. Spenser to be sure expands the last ; but then he expands it beyond its due limits. After all there are many favourite passages in his *Fairy Queen*, which will be instances of a great and cultivated genius misapplied." Some of these remarks are accurate, but the tone is cold and disagreeable. He, of whose pictures we may say, as Reynolds, I think, remarked of Rubens, that one is sufficient to illuminate a room, demands a different style of criticism.

MASON.

He has, however, written two poems which ought to preserve his name—The Elegy on Jessy, and the *School-mistress*. For purity of language, melody of versification, and simplicity of style, the elegy deserves high praise. The following stanza always affected me by its nature and tenderness.

If through the garden's flowery tribes I stray,
Where blooms the Jasmine that could once allure,
Hope not to find delight in us they say,
For we are spotless, Jessy, we are pure!

GRAY.

The "flowery tribes" is pedantic.

MASON.

In the *School-mistress* he was painting from his own remembrance of that village dame under whom he received his first instruction; he might have taken for his motto, *Quæque ipse miserrima vidi*. The sister beholding the perilous situation of her brother, is a very natural picture.

O ruthless scene! when from a nook obscure,
His little sister doth his peril see:
All playful as she sat, she grows demure;
She finds full soon her wonted spirits flee;

She meditates a prayer to set him free :
Nor gentle pardon could this dame deny,
(If gentle pardon could with dames agree)
To her sad grief that swells in either eye,
And wrings her so, that all for pity she could die.

So is that of the urchin sullenly brooding upon his chastisement :—

Behind some door, in melancholy thought,
Mindless of food, he, dreary caitiff! pines;
Ne for his fellows' joyaunce careth ought,
But to the wind all merriment resigns;
And deems it shame if he to peace inclines;
And many a sullen look askance is sent,
Which for his dame's annoyance he designs;
And still the more to pleasure him she's bent,
The more doth he, perverse, her 'haviour past resent.

GRAY.

I like the *School-mistress* exceedingly; but he should have written prose; one or two fragments have impressed me with a higher opinion of his talent, penetration, and good sense, than any of his rhymes*. However, if he has not deeply enriched

* This remark seems to be well-founded. His prose remains, imperfect and desultory as they are, frequently strike us by their point and truth. How full of sound thought and reflection are these observations. "Let us be careful to distinguish modesty, which is ever amiable, from reserve, which is only prudent. * * What is often termed shyness, is nothing more than refined sense, and an indifference to common ob-

our literature by his invention, we owe perhaps to his suggestion the publication of those admirable Reliques of English Poetry, which have infused into the modern Muse healthier and purer blood. Having well-nigh talked down the sun, we may bid farewell to the Lyre.

MASON.

Without a word for our contemporaries?

GRAY.

Dulness is a sacred power; but there is one name to be mentioned with pleasure—Oliver Goldsmith. I happened to be with Mr. Nichols, in the Summer, at Malvern, when he received a copy of

servations." This is the true reason why men of highly cultivated minds and imaginative feelings rarely shine in ordinary society. Their remarks are not understood: the coin is of a foreign country. Spenser would have been eclipsed by Mr. Wakley at a meeting of the Tail. Again, "I cannot see why people are ashamed to acknowledge their passion for popularity. The love of popularity is the love of being beloved:" this, too, shows an acquaintance with the heart. "The term Indecision in a man's character, implies an idea very nicely different from that of Irresolution; yet it has a tendency to produce it; and, like that, has often its original in excessive delicacy and refinement." In fine, if he had remembered his own saying, that love-verses, written without real passion, are often the most nauseous of all conceits, he would have given us less of Phillis and Daphne, and more of nature and common sense. Goldsmith admired Shenstone; but what he meant by his "warm imagination," I cannot tell.

the *Deserted Village*, and being struck by the beauty of a line, I requested him to read the poem aloud. That man, said I, when he had ended, is a poet. The clearness and felicity of his diction, the homeliness of his theme, and the familiar pathos of his illustrations, delighted me. Let me predict for the author a wide and lasting reputation. He will please the many and the few; the reader and the critic; the heart and the fancy

MASON.

I think you admire some of Mr. Johnson's verses in *London*.

GRAY.

It is one of the few imitations possessing the fire and completeness of an original. But the very intensity of its English feeling destroys the air of resemblance. Its rage has none of the sportiveness of Juvenal, who makes even

His desperate passes with a smile.

Satire, as the name imports, implies a richness, a variety, and a combination of materials: *London* has all these; and the Moralist might anticipate some reformation of the times, if the history of every age did not teach us how difficult it is to scourge a nation into virtue.

Labeo is whipt, and laughs me in the face ;
Why? for I smite and hide the galled place.
Gird but the Cynic's helmet on his head,
Cares he for Talus or his flail of lead.

BISHOP HALL.

There is always a succession of Labeos. A satirist must be a man of the world: familiar with the motives and the passions of men; for the anatomy of sin requires not only an untrembling, but a practised hand. *London* is a fine specimen of rhetoric in rhyme. Walpole, however, differs from me: yet I am certainly not prejudiced in the writer's favour. The occasional brutality of his invective, the abruptness of his manner, and the want of all refinement in his poetical tastes, are not recommendations to me.

I happened one day to be walking through the city with a friend, when we beheld a large uncouth figure rolling before us, in whom I at once recognised the cumbrous person of Johnson; and touching my companion on the arm, I said, perhaps loud enough to be heard, *Look! look! Bonstetten! the Great Bear! There goes Ursa Major.* After all, Sir Henry Wotton's maxim is the best:—The winds are tale-bearers.

MASON.

Indignation is an admirable Muse. How hap-

pily Juvenal's character of Lucilius applies to himself :—

Ense velut stricto quoties Lucilius ardens
Infremuit, rubet auditor, cui frigida mens est
Criminibus, tacita sudant præcordia culpa.

Juvenal's prose declamations—the preparatory exercises of his poetical genius—are a loss to literature. He had the nerve, the rapidity, the condensation of a great orator—a Latin Demosthenes. How little is to be gleaned of his history; unlike the lively friend of Mæcenas, who has left us an autobiography in his works*!

GRAY.

The incidental allusions to the writer's feelings and family are delightful features in a true poem; they even interest you in an inferior work. Statius, as you know, is ridiculed by Juvenal for his love of public readings; but you feel inclined to pardon his vanity for that touching allusion to the presence of his father, and his joy at the success and popularity of his son :—

Qualis eras, Latios quoties ego carmine patres
Mulcerem, felixque tui spectator adesses
Muneris: heu quali confusus gaudia fletu
Vota, piosque metus inter, lætumque pudorem!
Quum tuus ille dies, qua non mihi gloria major.

Sylv. v. 215.

* Horace.

The longing eye cast about the room, to discover his friend, Crispinus, among the audience, is hardly less interesting. Statius had a sweet voice and an elegant manner—qualities that fall to the lot of few poets.

THE DESTRUCTIVES IN 1643.

HENRY MORE AND JOSEPH BEAUMONT. ,

Even such the contrast that, where'er we move,
 To the mind's eye Religion doth present;
 Now with her own deep quietness content;
 Then like the mountain, thundering from above,
 Against the ancient Pine-trees of the grove,
 And the Land's humblest comforts. Now her mood
 Recalls the transformation of the flood,
 Whose rage the gentle skies in vain reprove,
 Earth cannot check. O terrible excess
 Of headstrong will! Can this be Piety?
 No—some fierce Maniac hath usurped her name;
 And scourges England struggling to be free;
 Her peace destroyed! her hopes a wilderness!
 Her blessings cursed—her glory turned to shame!

Troubles of Charles the First.*

THE Destructives in 1643 were only more mischievous than the Destructives of 1836, because they possessed a wider influence, and a more carefully organized plan of sedition. The Monster had a Head as well as a Tail. In adjusting the balance of the comparison, the larger share of sincerity and independent honesty is due to the revolutionists of 43. Their patriotism, however painfully misdirected, was not altogether a fiction; the

* Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Sketches*.

political features of the Confederacy, though swollen with evil passions, and burning with the intoxication of ambitious intemperance, were redeemed and humanized by traces of gentler expression. Agitation was not reduced into a profession; even Ireland did not array her Mendicants in purple. Amid all the ferocity of invective, all the malignity of hatred, all the intolerance of legislation, indications of better and wiser feelings were to be discovered. I speak now of the more eminent leaders of the Party. The Destructives of 1643 found an advocate in—Milton; the Destructives of 1836 in—Roebuck!

Into that afflicting portion of our history it is unnecessary to return. Its annals are a household story, in the memory of every one. The storm had long been gathering; the lightning tarried only for a conductor. It found one in Cromwell, a man whose character has defied the acutest observers, and in whom hypocrisy wears the aspect of truth. His connexion with Cambridge is not the least singular passage of his biography. He was entered of Sidney, according to a memorandum in the College Register, on the 23rd of April, 1616; and some memorials of him yet remain.

His bust, executed by Bernini, from a plaster-cast taken after death, is in the Master's Lodge, having been brought from Italy by Professor

Martyn; and the celebrated portrait drawn in crayons by Cooper, hangs in the Library, displaying in every feature the deep penetration, undaunted vigour, and self-confidence of its original. In the garden formerly stood a pear-tree, said to have been planted by Cromwell. It was cut down in March, 1833. His illustrious Latin Secretary has been more fortunate. The mulberry-tree, planted by the youthful student of Christ's, still flourishes in the pleasant garden of the college. Some years ago it suffered considerably from a violent gale of wind, which sadly shattered it; but its aged boughs are now carefully propped up, and its trunk protected by a partial covering of lead. With these aids it promises to look green for many years to come; its fertility appears to have undergone no change; in the Summer it is laden with fruit, of which more than two bushels of the finest flavour were gathered in the last season. Many interesting anecdotes are told of the homage paid to this venerable tree. I was amused by the ardour of a visiter from America, who, as he approached it, raised his hat from his head with expressions of unfeigned admiration. Enthusiasm only becomes ridiculous when excited by an unworthy object. In America, indeed, the author of *Paradise Lost* is regarded with even deeper veneration than by ourselves. The smallest fragments from his mulberry-tree are religiously

cherished ; and, within the last few weeks, a slip has been sent to one of the most remote situations of that mighty continent. May it take root and flourish, until the goodly boughs thereof stretch out unto the river ; thus shall it become more sacred than the Grecian Oak ; more sublime in its oracles ; more pure in its wisdom ; more lasting in its fame !

For the idle affectation that delights to collect relics merely for their scarcity, no contempt can be too severe ; but I confess myself to have derived a peculiar pleasure, while lately reading the poems of Milton, from marking the various resting-places with his own mulberry-leaves ; for I could not look upon those inanimate memorials without bringing before my eyes the flowing locks, the clear blue eyes, the delicate complexion of the Lady of his College ; ere the violence of political animosity, or the austerity of religious sectarianism, had cast a shadow upon the beauty of his youth.

Nor let these feelings be idly passed by. How often, while wandering along the rural lanes of Weston, or the pleasant fields of Bemerton, or musing in the lonely churchyard of Welwyn, or among those groves once haunted by Francis Beaumont—that “eager child,”—have the lines of Wordsworth arisen to my lips :

More sweet than odours caught by him who sails
Near spicy shores of Araby the blest,

A thousand times more exquisitely sweet,
 The freight of holy feeling which we meet
 In thoughtful moments, wafted by the gales,
 From fields where good men walk, or bowers wherein
 they rest.

Cowley has been dearer to my heart after sitting
 in the little chamber at Chertsey.

In looking back at the sufferings of the University, we are reminded of the prophetic declaration of Cleveland, who, after a strenuous but ineffectual opposition to the election of Cromwell for the town of Cambridge, which he gained by a majority of one, is reported to have exclaimed, "That single vote has ruined both Church and State!" Cleveland was of St. John's; and his pupil, Bishop Lake, has called him the delight and ornament of that Society; he enriched the library, improved the chapel, and elevated the character of the college. The protection obtained for the University by its chancellor, the Earl of Holland, was only nominal. The occupation of the town by Cromwell with the forces of the Parliament, was not likely to be very propitious to piety or to learning.

Of the insults to which the members of the University were exposed during this Reign of Terror, accounts have been preserved by eye-witnesses. The tyranny of the soldiers was not confined to the destruction of painted glass; while

the senate, says Dr. Bastwick, was solemnly assembled in the Regent House, it was surrounded by armed bands, "who wanted nothing but the word to despatch us," because they refused to confer a degree upon some individual, whose only merit consisted in his republicanism. The fanaticism of the Sectaries broke out in various excesses. The Lady Margaret's public preacher, Mr Power, of Christ's, on his road to church, was pursued across the market-place by the infuriate soldiers, shouting, "*a Pope—a Pope.*" Even the Scriptures did not escape the general sacrilege*. The Prayer-Book was torn at St. Mary's in the presence of Cromwell, who rebuked the clerk for complaining of the desecration. The plate was taken away from the Communion-Table of St. John's. The college gardens were everywhere broken up; the orchards cut down; the Grove of Jesus, albeit, says Fuller, no idolatrous one, was levelled with the ground.

Fuller closes his history of the University with the following characteristic notice of his own college. In Queen's "there was made a thorough reformation; neither master, fellow, nor scholar, being left of the foundation; so that, according to the laws of the Admiralty, it might seem a true wreck, and forfeited in this Land-Tempest for lack

* See the *Querela Cantabrigiensis* for other circumstances.

of a live thing therein, to preserve the propriety thereof. However, some conceived this a great severity, contrary to the eternal moral of the Jewish Law, provided against the depopulation of birds' nests, that the old and young ones should not be destroyed together. But to prevent a vacuity, (that detestation of Nature,) a new plantation was soon substituted in their room, who, short of the former in their learning and abilities, went beyond them in good affections to the Parliament." The only names to which the apologists of this violent ejection can point with any propriety, are Cudworth and Lightfoot, scholars of whom any nation or age might be proud.

The Reformation, as it was called, of the University, was intrusted to the Earl of Manchester, of whom Clarendon has left a very honourable character. But he was the minister of men, in whose breasts his own gentleness could have found no echo, and the nature of his mission precluded the indulgence of any lenient feeling towards a persecuted scholar. It was during this period that we may suppose the following brief conversation to have occurred. Few readers of English literature, and no lovers of pure and ennobling religion, are unacquainted with Henry More, the early friend of Milton, whose silence respecting him is not more unfortunate than surprising. That he appreciated

his glowing eloquence, his simple manners, his extended learning, his almost primitive piety, cannot be questioned. More was a poet in mind; not in ear. He kindled his torch at the shrine of Spenser, whose enthusiasm he imbibed without his music. His verses never beam with any of his master's lustre. What Warburton said of a spirit equally tender and amiable, is also applicable to More. "Poetry made Milton an enthusiast; enthusiasm made Norris a poet." Indeed, his own definition of a true poet, is *an enthusiast in good earnest*. His ideas of the art were lofty and dignified:—

Whatever man he be that dares to deem |
True poets' skill to spring of earthly race,
I must him tell that he doth misesteem
Their strange estate, and eke himself disgrace
By his rude ignorance. For there's no place
For forced labour, or slow industry
Of flagging wits, in that high fiery chase;
So soon as of the Muse they quicken'd be,
At once they rise, and lively sing like lark in skie.

Like to a meteor, whose material
Is low unwieldly earth, base unctuous slime,
Whose inward hidden parts ethereal,
Lie close up-wrapt in that dull sluggish *fume*,
Lie fast asleep, till at some fatal time
Great Phœbus' lamp has fired its inward spright,
And then even of itself on high doth climb;

That erst was dark becomes all eye, all sight,
Bright star that to the wise of future things gives
light.

Whoever is conversant with the prose writings of More, and they are mines of precious thought and originality of argument, will probably recognise in the following conversation, a reflection, though a faint one, of his beautiful and enthusiastic mind. Of Beaumont a brief notice will be sufficient. He was a descendant of the family that gave us the author of *Bosworth Field*, and the friend and companion of Fletcher. During his absence from Cambridge, he composed his elaborate poem *Psyche*—which Southey, who usually finds something to admire in our elder writers, has condemned to perpetual oblivion. It requires, indeed, a bold heart to travel over its endless cantos; yet the path is not uncheered by flowers, nor the scenes destitute of interest. The principal defects arise out of the interminable allegories with which he swells the work; the portraits want vigour and decision; and even in the poem retain a dim and shadowy appearance. The picture of Drowsiness, however, is not without merit:—

Up from the water crept a heavy cloud
Of dusky vapours, on whose shoulders rid
Fat Drowsiness, who rubb'd her eyes, and bow'd
Down to her bosom her unwieldy head.

The life of More was one continued abstraction from the business and occupations of the world, and we may easily paint to our fancy his dismay and affliction when a hasty step was heard at his door, and Beaumont rushed into the chamber with the melancholy intelligence. We hear him exclaiming in the sorrow of his heart :—" Then the cloud hath broken upon us at last. And are they all to depart ?"

BEAUMONT.

The spoilers spare none.

MORE.

And Cowley?

BEAUMONT.

Yes!

MORE.

And Crashaw?

BEAUMONT.

All!—all!

MORE.

Then let me arise and depart. Some sequestered valley will open before my feet; some humble cottage will welcome the poor pilgrim. Yet ere I go hence, I will tread again that quiet garden where the sun hath so often gone down upon me with dear John Milton, and that beloved youth*,

* Edward King.

over whose head the billows of the sea have swept. I would carry away with me a leaf of the mulberry-tree. And then let me cheer my heart with the chamber of Spenser, and wander once more along the green orchard of Pembroke, where the Martyr Ridley so often walked, learning by heart the Epistles of the New Testament. O blessed name! a virtue and a strength goeth of thee into the heart; enlivening faith, kindling hope, sanctifying sorrow. What an unyielding soul! what an invincible courage; what a rejoicing in the sharpest pangs; what a triumph in the depth of degradation! Oh, my friend, when tossed about by the storm and waves,—hated and scorned for conscience sake, let us remember how Ridley stared in the face of Death. If we believe like him, we shall conquer like him; the same Hand can make us mighty, even in our weakness; victorious even in our death. Then shall we exclaim with a joyful heart—"I am now ready to be offered; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day*."

BEAUMONT.

It is the high privilege of the Christian not only

* Second Epistle to Timothy, iv. 7, 8.

to believe on his Divine Master, but to suffer for him*.

MORE.

Ay, truly. Peace can sit and sing by a dim hearth, and refresh herself with a crust of bread, and make her spirits dance with a cup of water, more merrily than the warmest worshipper of that sparkling deity enthroned in his crystalline heaven†. Religion, too, ever follows her sister Peace; they will both go with the scholar to his hermitage. Sunday shall guide me through the darkest week with its sacred torch; and I can still bathe my heart in the fragrancy of the Gospel, and lighten my eyes with the dawn of a better day; and hang upon the neck of David, and sit down by the fountain of Siloe. Though they put me in bonds, yet shall I be free; for I can still wander through the corn-fields to Emmaus; and listen to the Precepts of everlasting truth on the Mount of Olives: walk where He walked, dwell where He dwelt. This peace the world can neither give, nor take away.

BEAUMONT.

I, too, have some pleasant dreams to carry with

* St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, i. 29.

† This description of Bacchus is given almost in the words of More.

me to my native village; some snatches of song, though rude and unlearned, yet sweet to my ear, and hereafter, perchance, to be linked into softer harmony. But this darkness may flee away; mercy may even now be shining behind the cloud: the times of refreshment from the countenance of the Lord may be at hand*.

MORE.

Nay, I do not despair: the holy Prophet tells us, that when the enemy cometh in like a flood, then shall the Spirit of the Lord uplift a standard against it. And do not all Histories, those Confessions of Time, confirm the declaration? How often have the fiery Thrones and Principalities of Darkness grown pale before the Army of Martyrs! In the blackest night of the Church this Banner hath been uplifted. Even in those dreadful days of persecution, when the gloom was illuminated only by the torches of maddening zeal, and the glare of hungry flames preying upon the innocent; when Superstition, and Hate, and Revenge roamed through the land; even then, while the Enemy did, indeed, rush in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord uplifted a Standard against it! And so shall it be again. This fury of the Philistines shall be

* Acts iii. 16.

beaten down; these overflowings of ungodliness driven back. Of a truth, the Enemy doth come in like a flood, and with the roar of many waters; but the Spirit of the Lord shall open the glittering folds of its Standard, and make the proud waves thereof to be stayed. God chasteneth his ungrateful children in divers manners. This heavy scourge may be a Father's visitation upon the crimes of his people; and of a truth, the savour of them hath long gone up on high from a thousand altars to Belial. We are too like the barren fig-tree; year after year the Lord calleth for fruit, but none is found; the rain and the dew from heaven distil upon us, yet we put forth nothing but leaves; Summer and Winter—still we only cumber the ground. We shelter none, we refresh none. At length the curse goeth forth—*Never fruit grow on thee more!* Is it not so?

BEAUMONT.

Alas! I fear!

MORE.

The sins of every one of us call sternly for repentance; the scholar hath made an Idol of his learning, the poet of his fancy, the statesman of his eloquence. Prosperity hath inebriated our hearts with new wine; we have soiled our Garments at

her Festival*. Yet not all—Piety and Learning have some true and devout disciples. God in his provident mercy hath never suffered these Stars of the moral world to be wanting. They shine upon us by night and day, cheering and guiding our course over the most tempestuous and dreary sea. Nor do we make the perilous voyage alone. Shall we then—creatures of little faith!—cry aloud at the dashing of the waves, and the tumult of the storm, *We perish! we perish!* as if He who is with us either slumbered or slept?

BEAUMONT.

Let us rather arm ourselves for the combat.

MORE.

But ah, how vain a poor scholar's armoury against this onset; how weak his sling against such a Goliath! Eloquence, mighty though it be, overthrows not the Giant; words of themselves, however

* The following remark occurs in More's *Discourse* on James i., 27, *True religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.* "The word *ασπιλον* signifies properly such kind of spots as are in clothes, by spilling some liquid or oily thing on them. An hard task certainly to be religious at this height. Is it to be thought possible that we should wear the Garment of Mortality every day, nay every hour and moment, for thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years together, and soil it by no mischance or miscarriage, either of careless youth, violent manhood, or palsied old age?"

noble, are harmless as the shadow of Hercules' Club in the sunshine*. With such a blow the brain of the Nemean Lion was never shaken†. Neither have my studies or habits of thought led me to these thorny paths of controversy. Here have I dwelt for so many years, that every old stone has become dear to me. I have slept the sleep of life in yonder chamber; I would sleep the pleasant sleep of death in yonder chapel."

The poet's prayer was granted; he was unharmed amid the general rapine; they left him to dream with Plato in his academic bower‡.

* See Sermon on Peter xxii. 23.

† See the twenty-fifth Idyll of Theocritus.

‡ Campbell.

THE POET WORDSWORTH

AND

PROFESSOR SMYTHE.

Απεπαυσάτο του λόγου. και εγώ μιν πολὺν χρόνον πεκλημένος
 ἔτι πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐβλεπον ὡς εἶδοντα τι, ἐπιθυμῶν ἀκούειν.

Plato, Protag.

WHAT a rabble has persecuted my friend, in these latter times, the glory of his country. An elephant is born to be consumed by ants in his unapproachable solitude. Wordsworth is the prey of Jeffrey. Such was the indignant wail of the Voice from Italy*; but the dream has undergone a change.

That mild Apostate from poetic rule†, has lived to realize his own noble declaration, that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and to the enemies it provokes; a vivacious quality, ever doomed to meet with opposition,

* Walter Savage Landor.

† *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.*

and still triumphing over it. The temples they have erected may, indeed, be neglected for a season, but this disregard endures not long ; the heart will at length vindicate itself, and weary of the pursuit after false idols, return with renewed delight to the shrine of a simpler and purer worship. Those glittering productions of fancy, which are thrown forth with such rapidity and ease from many minds, dissolve with the faintest handling ; the sunny bubbles vanish with the touch. But the structures piled up by the hands of Genius know not decay ; no storm of the popular elements can deface or shatter them ; like vast columns of cloudless jasper they continue to illuminate the intellectual universe. So it is with Shakspeare, with Milton, and with Spenser. And if we do not elevate the author of the *Excursion* to an equal rank, it is not from insensibility to his rare and admirable faculties. But that Triumvirate admits of no addition ; they are, and must continue, the Immortal Three,—unapproached and unapproachable.

To all who adequately estimate the influence of true poetry upon the moral feelings, the widening fame of Mr. Wordsworth must be a source of deep satisfaction ; and reflecting upon its beneficial diffusion, our thanks are due to those Interpreters by whom its hidden beauty and wisdom have been unfolded to the common eye, and among them is

one name not to be pronounced without sentiments of earnest enthusiasm by every admirer of fervid eloquence, and generous and animating criticism. Need I mention Professor Wilson, whose kindred illustrations of kindred genius always seem to embody the lines of Marlow—

Where Beauty, mother of the Muses, sits,
And comments volumes with her ivory Pen.

St. John's has added a charm to its venerable Combination Room in the portrait of Mr. Wordsworth by Pickersgill, which is not inappropriately hung opposite to that of Sir John Herschell; at a certain point, says De Staël, Poetry and Science meet. Its resemblance to the Poet is happy and striking; though glowing, perhaps, with a ruddier health.

Of Professor Smythe, the worthy occupier of the Chair of Gray, all parties have spoken, and continue to speak, in terms of equal regard; even Byron, while training a Bear to sit for a Trinity Fellowship, and pleasantly commemorating the Vandals of Cambridgeshire, excepted him from the catalogue. One fault, however, may justly be objected to him; like his greatest predecessor, he has written too little. I can still remember, after the lapse of many years, a small volume of Poems, said by the Edinburgh Reviewer, to be finished with all the delicacy of a moonlight landscape.

He has inherited the taste with the fastidiousness of Gray; and amid all the revolutions of literary opinions, remains faithful, among the faithless, to the school of Dryden and of Pope.

SMYTHE.

Yet he fought every inch of ground with the Public.

WORDSWORTH.

True, but perseverance is not always an indication of great abilities; an indifferent poet is invulnerable by a repulse, the want of sensibility being in him what a noble self-confidence was in Milton. These excluded Suitors continue, nevertheless, to hang their garlands at the gate, to anoint the door-post, and even kiss the very threshold of her home, though the Muse beckons them not in.

SMYTHE.

I perceive that you have not read Lucretius in vain.

WORDSWORTH.

The mantle of Darwin is not worn out; it still covers many shoulders. His rouged and tinselly Muse rejoices in numerous admirers. The same Taste seems to preside over our poetry and our drama; in both, Pageants are supreme; in both, the gilded cymbals are equally important.

Nothing can be more vicious than the profusion of similes—those spangles of the poetical apparel—which abound in our rhymes. Fuller, indeed, said truly that Similes are the windows that give the best light; but windows suppose the existence of a corresponding structure. The rhymers to whom I refer have nothing to light; and in those who advance some pretensions to architectural skill, we may notice a lamentable deficiency in what Pope so happily called, in reference to a sister art, the reasoning of the eye. They seem to possess no idea of harmony in their colours,—of proportion in their parts.

SMYTHE.

A very fatal delusion among modern writers of verse, is the humble opinion they entertain of its difficulties; a subject upon which your friend, Mr. Coleridge, has been very eloquent. I have seen the assertion of one who, through a long life, has been thirsting after fame, that Genius is all, art and toil nothing. How erroneous in philosophy; how unfounded in fact. On what production, kept alive by the love of ages, shall we found such an axiom; on the elaborate tenderness of Euripides; the chastened beauty of Sophocles; the costly weavings of Ben Jonson; the diligent purity of Virgil; the *Gerusalemme* of Tasso: the

Commedia of Dante; the patiently-wrought enchantments of Ariosto: or to contract the illustration, shall we support it upon that immortal poem, into which, after "long choosing and beginning late," Milton poured the wealth of fifty years? The aphorism ought to run thus: "Genius without art and toil is nothing." Its brightness only breaks out in flashes; it will have no clear orb of splendour. The absence of art assumes the want of a plan; without which no long poem will survive. Even Spenser, who was too often seduced by the caresses of his Fancy, saw the necessity of artistical skill; as Prior has ingeniously remarked, all his flowery paths seem to conduct him into one great road*. You have rightly explained Genius to be the art of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before. A definition from which flow two inferences: the first implying, *diligence*; the second, *originality*. These qualities are self-dependent: you find both in Gray.

WORDSWORTH.

I confess my inability to keep pace with your admiration of Gray. He appears to me chiefly remarkable as a consummate master of poetic diction; his poems shine not so much with the splendour of the thoughts, as the light of the words. I

* Preface to *Solomon*.

have attempted to prove this in an analysis of his sonnet.

SMYTHE.

Say rather that the thoughts glow through the words, kindling them into colours and lustre.

WORDSWORTH.

I draw also an unfavourable conclusion from his depreciatory opinion of Thomson and Collins; to the exquisite beauty of the *Castle of Indolence* he was avowedly insensible, and of the sweetest, the most poetic odes of their kind in the language, he could only say, that they deserved to last for some years, but would not. Mr. Jeffrey could hardly have produced a more unfortunate prophecy. In condemning the ornamental character of Gray's diction, I omit the Elegy from my censure; it is almost the only instance where he deviated into nature.

SMYTHE.

Yet in truth, Gray did not differ so very widely from your own theory. We think in words, he said, but poetry consists in expression; and beside this, your criticism is unfair in suppressing all those instances of moral wisdom, and what you, on a different occasion, have styled a meditative pathos, a reflective sadness,

into which you say the mind cannot sink of itself, but must descend by treading the steps of thought*. Now, in this pathos Gray is inimitable. He reminds us of the *ἠθικαὶ ἀρμονίαι*—the Ethic Harmonies of ancient days. You cannot read a stanza without being struck, as with a Divine rod, by the wise truth of one of his sentences. There is no writer whose works occupy so small a space, from whom so many moral lessons might be gathered; and let me add, that no writer, except Shakspeare, is likely to live so long in the hearts of the people. When no green tomb swells up in our village burial-grounds, no rustic moralist exists to spell the decayed epitaphs, no busy housewife to “ply her evening care,” no children to climb the knees of their returning father, then shall the memory of Gray die and be forgotten. It has been urged that his beauties are not original; but the accusation holds not of all his most excellent passages, nor of the greater number, nor of many. In him you perceive the full meaning of imitative *fancy*, in opposition to direct *imitation*; that is, the art of elevating and improving what he borrows; of melting the gold into a more striking image; of detaching a thought and blending it with a new combination. Into a similar explanation all the parallel passages that crowd the new

* Supplement to the Preface.

editions of Milton may be resolved. But as Criticism, like History, teaches best by example, let me illustrate my remark by the lines in the Progress of Poetry, where, describing the early years of Shakspeare, he says,

. The dauntless child
Stretched forth its little arms, and smiled.

The passage itself comes from Sandys:

. The child
Stretched forth its little arms and smiled*.

But Gray, by the insertion of the epithet *dauntless*, so expressive of the ardent childhood of the great poet, has given a life and a spirit to the picture; he has adorned his imitation by his fancy; he has converted a theft into a victory. Of his adaptations from the ancient authors I must admit, for my own part, that I find in them a source of uncommon delight; we come unexpectedly upon them, as upon objects that recall the happiest days of our life. He awakens at every line remembrances of Grecian and Latin Song, so that the poet, as one of his biographers has elegantly observed, seems to accompany us into the regions of his beautiful creations, while the activity of our imagination multiplies into a thousand forms the image it has

* See Mitford's Remarks upon the Poetry of Gray.

received ; and the memory, gathering up the most distant associations, surrounds the poet with a lustre not his own. There is not less truth than beauty in Davenant's remark, that all the streams of our heroic song flow from one Grecian Spring.

WORDSWORTH.

The objection I have ventured to hint against Gray, is more unmitigated towards his friend Mason, of whose *Caractacus* I remember to have heard Mr. Coleridge say that it was one continued *false* *setto**. His *English Garden* possesses high merit as a didactic poem ; but the playful criticism of a contemporary writer is just, who says that he begins by invoking Simplicity, but she never comes. How he would have stared at such a passage as this from the *Pharonnida* of Chamberlain, a poem of which my friend, Mr. Southey, speaks in high commendation !

. Before the birth
 O' th' sluggish morning from his bed had drawn
 The early villager, the sober dawn
 Lending our eyes the slow salutes of light,
 We are encountered with the welcome sight
 Of some poor scattered cottages that stood
 In the dark shadow of a spacious wood
 That fringed an humble valley. Towards those,
 Whilst the still morn knew nought to discompose

* This remark is also recorded in the *Table Talk*.

Her sleeping infancy, we went, and now
Being come so near, we might discover how
The unstirred smoke streamed from the cottage tops,
A glimmering light from a low window stops
Our further course*.

It was with a view of aiding in the purification of our poetical style, that my Lyrical Ballads were composed; in which, as I have stated in the Preface, humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition the feelings exist in a simpler form, and may, therefore, be contemplated with clearer accuracy, and communicated with greater force; because also from those feelings spring the manners of rural life, which, from their very nature, are more easy of comprehension, and more enduring in themselves; and, finally, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of Nature, from whom there is continually going out a healing virtue. Nor is the language of such men of itself unsusceptible of imaginative adornment. He who has Nature for his companion during the day, must, in some measure, be ennobled by the intercourse. The language of the heart changes

* This neglected poem deserves a better fate; how pretty is the picture of

..... Glad Fame that brings
Truth's messages upon her silver wings.

not with fashion, nor requires an academy to protect its purity. The passages in Chaucer most affecting, and addressing themselves most directly to the sympathies, are as intelligible to us, as they would have been to the company at the Tabard. Truth takes no account of centuries. How men undervalue the power of Simplicity! but it is the real key to the heart. There is a stanza in Logan's Ballad, which always brings the tears to my eyes; its melancholy is so intense and indescribable.

His mother from the window looked,
With all the longing of a mother;
Hand in hand his sisters walked
The green-wood path to meet their brother.
They sought him East, they sought him West,
They sought him all the forest thoro';
They only saw the cloud of night,
They only heard the roar of Yarrow*!

I reckon it among my chief temporal blessings to have been born and bred in a mountainous country, and to have had my intellectual infancy, as it were, nourished at the breast of Nature. A passion thus early awakened, grew with my growth, and strengthened with my years:

. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,

* Those who have heard Mr. Wordsworth recite these lines in his own peculiar and musical manner, will recollect the effect they produced.

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms were then to me
An appetite, a feeling, and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.

I can still remember the delight of my heart, when
I first looked into the nest of the golden-wren, deep
in the twilight foliage of the Elder-tree; or watched
upon the hazel-copse the green-linnet drinking in
the sunshine and sweetness of a Summer day,
while—

. The flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

We all laugh at pursuing a shadow; although the
lives of the multitude are devoted to the chase; but
it is a delightful thing to follow one's own shadow
along a green lane, when the sun, through the over-
arching boughs, chequers the path; and the leaves,
while the light breath of air plays among them,
dance on the ground as upon a river; and you
hear, meanwhile, only the stirring of a linnet in the
hedge, or the struggling of a bee in the warm grass.
Oh, it is in such walks as these that Nature leads
her children up to God; for poetry is only the
eloquence and enthusiasm of religion. Even the
familiar face of a wild daisy, or a drop of dew on

a road-side flower, have, in my heart, oft-times
awoke thoughts more tender than tears could
express.

O, nursed at happy distance from the cares
Of a too anxious world, mild Pastoral Muse!
That to the sparkling crown Urania wears,
And to her sister Clio's laurel wreath,
Preferr'st a garland culled from purple heath,
Or blooming thicket moist with morning dew;
Was such bright spectacle vouchsafed to me?
And was it granted to the simple ear
Of thy contented Votary,
Such melody to hear!
Him rather suits it, side by side with thee,
Wrapped in a fit of pleasing indolence,
While thy tired lute hangs on the hawthorn-tree,
To lie and listen, till o'er drowsed sense
Sinks, hardly conscious of the influence,
To the soft murmur of the vagrant bee.

SMYTHE.

Beautiful, indeed !

WORDSWORTH.

Such feelings find no response in the bosoms of
worldly men ; Johnson would have preferred Mr.
Thrale's coach with the windows up, to the loveliest
pastoral vale in Westmorland. I think of Beattie's
beautiful stanza, and wonder how such a despiser
of Nature "can hope to be forgiven."

. : Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Catch glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
See Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn !

How few know what it is to behold God in his works ; to feel that He is all in all ; that his Presence imparts a glory to the flower ; a beauty to the atmosphere ; that a paradise still lives for the Poet :

To every form of being is assigned
An active principle, howe'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures, in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, and every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air.
Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
Beyond itself communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed :
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude, from link to link
It circulates, the soul of all the worlds.

SMYTHE.

You have here embodied, perhaps unconsciously, one of the most thoughtful passages in the *Novum Organum*. All tangible bodies, says Bacon, contain a spirit, covered over, enveloped with the

grosser body. There is no known body in the upper parts of the earth, without its spirit, whether it be generated by the attenuating and concocting power of the celestial warmth, or otherwise; for the pores of tangible bodies are not a vacuum; but either contain air, or the peculiar spirit of the substance; and this not a *vis*, an energy, a soul, or a fiction, but a real, subtile, and invisible body, circumscribed by place and dimension.

WORDSWORTH.

The Greeks had a beautiful superstition, that if a rainbow rested upon a tree, it immediately became fragrant; in like manner, by the over-shadowing light of a poetic fancy, would I waken perfume even in the bramble. For, wherefore should poetry be limited to themes of stately and regal argument, or be thought incapable of striking its root, or flourishing, except in earth gathered from Italy and Greece! Rather let us endeavour to rear it beside the cottage door, that it may hang its golden fruit—not more pure to the eye than to the taste—into every cottage window. Every sequestered hamlet, every lovely homestead, has its tale of,—

Natural sorrow, joy, or pain,
That has been, and may be again.

Such subjects, full as they are of wisdom and pathos, will not be selected by the numerous band who strive only to startle the world, not to instruct

it. There is a class of poets—and a large one—who, like the Novelists, belong to the Circulating Libraries, and flutter into ephemeral notice upon the wings of a paragraph. By nature the commonest insects, they owe their coloured plumage to the forcing action of artificial warmth. Equally feeble in their minds and their verses, the shadow of your hand will “mar their murmurings*.” Let no founder of a Commonwealth think of banishing poetry; he will find in it a powerful helper in the amelioration of the destiny of man. I confine my remarks, of course, to those nobler spirits enriched by learning, elevated by wisdom, sanctified by religion; unto whom Poetry is as a ladder, whereby to climb into the invisible world: men who return from their celestial Colloquies with a brightened countenance, and an exalted heart. The true Bard ascends to receive knowledge, he descends to impart it; and regarding his art as the most dignified of all—since it is learning illuminated by fancy; fancy kindled by a fire from the Altar; looking, I say, at his high calling, he devotes his whole energies to the task, and his entire life shapes itself into one great and beautiful Poem. Thus the Creations of his mind become his companions; they talk to him; minister to him; watch over him. So Chaucer, in his dungeon, was cheered by

* Spenser.

the *Lady of Love**; and who knows not of the radiant face that beamed upon Tasso, in his vault at Ferrara—and such a vault!—pining in hunger, nakedness, and despair. So, too, was the night of Milton brightened by—

Forms that glitter in the Muses' ray—

and the beauty of angelic wings shone upon the darkness. His sojourn at Cambridge had, at least, familiarized him with the dim religious light; and often while lingering with solemn awe through the chapel of King's College,—

. While from our sight
With gradual stealth the lateral windows hide
Their Portraits, their stone-work glimmers, dyed
In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light,
Martyr or King, or sainted Eremite.—

Often during these hallowed seasons, when the soul was lifted into heaven, have I thought upon the rapture with which his youthful heart must have acknowledged the enchantment of the place:—

They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear,
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts if it cross the threshold.

* Alluding to the *Testament of Love*, supposed to have been composed during his imprisonment.

ONE HOUR WITH HENRY MARTYN,
AND A GLANCE AT
THE PRESENT STATE OF RELIGIOUS FEELING
IN THE UNIVERSITY.

PALEY, in commenting upon the propagation of Christianity, dwells with much earnestness upon the success of the Apostolic Ministry, as a strong proof of the divine origin of the religion. For what had the apostles, he says, to assist them in their preaching which the modern missionaries have not. If piety and ardent zeal had been sufficient, they possess them in a high degree; for piety and zeal could alone excite them to the undertaking. If simplicity of life, or purity of manners, were the allurements, the conduct of these men is irreproachable. If the influence of education and learning be required, which of the modern missionaries is not superior to all the apostles, both absolutely and relatively*. The internal power and beauty of the religion remain the same; in its precepts equally holy, in its morality equally chaste, in its exhortations equally eloquent.

In one respect, indeed, the modern missionary

* *Evidences of Christianity*, part 2, sect. 2.

possesses a peculiar advantage. Prophecy, was the beautiful remark of Bishop Newton, is a growing evidence; and so it has proved itself. Every year has added something to its strength; the accomplishment of the *local* prophecies, as related and demonstrated in the works of Burckhardt, and other eastern travellers, is decisive and incontrovertible. Their fulfilment furnishes another powerful argument to the Christian missionary; yet how ineffectual, how discouraging the labours even of the most active, and the most successful. Look, for instance, at India, the scene of Henry Martyn's unwearied exertions. How little has a highly educated and intelligent church been able to perform during the whole period of its establishment. How few names have been added to the Book of Life! In that rich and luxurious climate the Tree of Divine Knowledge seems alone to pine. Yet its root has been nourished by the ashes of Christian brethren. Mothers, and fathers, and sisters, and brothers, have been forsaken for the cause,—not even the domestic hearth has been preferred before it.

The dearest associations, the most delightful studies, have been joyfully abandoned. "This is the day," says Mr. Martyn in his Indian Diary, "that I left Cambridge. My thoughts frequently recurred with many tender recollections to that seat

of my beloved brethren ; and I again wandered in spirit among the trees on the banks of the Cam."

Nor has the self-sacrificing temper which animated the original Preachers of Christianity been dead in their successors. What savage sea, or what inhospitable shore has not witnessed their exertions. They, too, have been in perils by land, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren ; in fastings often, in prison often ; in cold and nakedness. They, too, have willingly become poor that they might make many rich,—yet has all this enthusiasm, all this self-consecration of the soul and body to one great pursuit reaped only a barren harvest. We have reason to believe that the apostles converted more in a single week than the united efforts of European missionaries during fifty years. Are we not, therefore, driven upon the conclusion that they possessed means of conviction which we have not ; that they had proofs to appeal to which we want*?

But while, if viewed only in reference to the *avowed* object of his mission, Mr. Martyn's success was trifling, *relatively* he performed the most valuable and deeply important services to the cause of religion. His translation of the Scriptures into the Eastern tongue laid a foundation for the gradual subjection of the popular mind to the precepts of the Bible. In accomplishing this great task, he

* Paley.

planted, as it were, a root of the true Vine, which future ages may behold overshadowing the land. Nor did the benefits of his labours stop here; they gave a stimulus to Christian scholars and Christian communities; the work has been continually advancing; version upon version of the Word of God has been sent forth into the uttermost recesses of the earth; so that by the power of the Almighty acting upon his servants, a new miracle may be said to have been wrought. The voice of thanksgiving and praise ascends from a thousand provinces; and the sun shines upon no corner of the habitable globe in which men do not hear in their "own tongues the wonderful works of God."

But there is another circumstance in the life of Mr. Martyn, more intimately connected with the objects of this volume. We are indebted to his example for much of the good feeling that now pervades the junior portion of the University. All who were acquainted with Cambridge society as it existed among the undergraduates fifteen or twenty years ago, will recognise in the present state of things a very marked and singular improvement. In the earlier days of Mr. Simeon's ministry, he was exposed, together with his followers, to many and distressing ebullitions of dislike; and instances sometimes occurred when the college authorities judged it expedient to forbid their pupils attend-

ance upon his discourses. The character of Mr. Martyn did much towards overcoming this opposition; his high attainments, his simplicity of manners, his academical distinction, imparted a dignity and weight to his name; and Piety herself became more lovely and of better report when she appeared in the person of a Senior Wrangler. No person, I believe, of similar opinions, had attracted by his talents so much notice. When, therefore, it was discovered that the strictest attention to religious duties, instead of weakening the intellect, only strengthened and concentrated its powers, others were quickly found to adopt the same manners.

I am not called upon to declare how far I coincide with, or in what particulars I dissent from, the principles distinguishing the School of Theology of which Mr. Simeon is the founder. I believe that its devotedness to the cause of piety, though not always well informed, nor always flowing in the best channels, has, nevertheless, aided in the general promotion of those serious feelings, now so apparent among our younger members. Nor need we limit its influence to the immediate calls of religious worship; it may be traced in the common intercourse of society, and the check it imposes, under the shape of public opinion, upon that class of persons who, in a greater or less degree, embarrass the domestic economy of every college.

No question of academic discipline has been more agitated of late, than the propriety of compulsory attendance in the chapel of the college. "If attendance, it has been observed, were not compulsory, we all know it would soon cease; as it has ceased in all parish-churches where prayers were once daily. Young men, and old men too, need urging to the discharge of duties, the obligation of which is fully acknowledged nevertheless. Whatever may be the motives, and they are probably of a mixed kind (as they are upon most occasions), by which youths in a college-chapel are gathered together, this we must say, that we do not observe more reverential behaviour in any place of worship than there. God only can search the heart; but as far as man can judge, the undergraduates are as much under the impression that they are met in God's house to render him an offering of prayer and praise, as any congregation elsewhere; and a more interesting spectacle we do not know, which it would not be, if there was in it any tincture of irreverence, than that presented to the eye of a casual visiter of our Universities, in the chapel of a great college—the flower of the land before him—the hope of England—coupled with the reflection which the place where they are assembled suggests, that the generation to whom the chief interests of the country in every department are to be soon

confided, are thus taught betimes to have the fear of God before their eyes."

Every one who has joined in this beautiful ceremonial, or contemplated its appearance, will admit the force of the preceding observations. Even to the eye of the common spectator, the scene is full of peculiar interest; but to the individuals themselves, sensations must often arise of far deeper intensity. While the pealing organ, and the shout of many voices, raise their hearts to heaven, memory, it may be supposed, will not be inactive; and the thought that Newton, or Ray*, or Milton, or Taylor, once pressed the stones on which they are kneeling: and still, if we may so speak, sanctify the walls with their presence;—such a thought as this may blend with the enthusiasm of the spirit, and elevate its intellectual wishes in proportion to the exaltation of its spiritual desires. These sentiments cannot, of course, be universal; it is sufficient for the argument if they prevail to a moderate extent, and by the ennobling a few minds, invisibly and gradually communicate a higher tone to the many. Undoubtedly, if the restrictive regulations were removed to-morrow, a numerous body of

* "Because I could no longer" said this admirable Christian, (when ejected from his fellowship for nonconformity, and prevented from exercising his clerical duties,) "serve God in the church, I thought myself bound to do it by my writings."

students would be found sufficiently impressed with a sense of their dependence upon God, and of their duty to return daily thanks to him for his mercies, to assemble in those temples consecrated to his service. And this supposition is countenanced by the crowds that throng the galleries of St. Mary's, when such men as Mr. Rose, or Mr. Dale, or Mr. Melvil occupy the pulpit; each differing from the other in manner and in style, yet each commanding the attention and the respect of an overflowing congregation. The same remark will apply to the other churches in the town, where the academic dress is conspicuous; and particularly to the evening lecture of Mr. Carus. These are most valuable and interesting indications of religious feeling; and the more so, as they flow entirely from unconstrained inclination, and are to be deemed sincere, inasmuch as no inducement to hypocrisy *can* be assigned.

Yet admitting to its fullest extent the efficacy of the voluntary principle, no reflecting mind will consent to intrust the observances of religion entirely to its influence. Nor, indeed, is there any occasion; for those who would attend of their own accord, will not experience any hardship from a regulation, which their good feeling virtually repeals; while those, on the other hand, whose associations lead them to different occupations, and

who would gladly escape from the payment of a morning or evening tribute to their heavenly Father, may hereafter rejoice, that once in every day, at least, they were obliged to listen to the word of God. Seed thus imperceptibly dropped, though choked for a season, may, at a future time, spring up, under the dew of His blessing, and bear fruit a hundred fold. Nor let it be deemed matter of reproach, that our piety requires such constant fanning to keep the flame alive. One of our most thoughtful moralists has told us, that religion, of which the rewards are distant, and which is animated only by Faith and Hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind, unless it be invigorated and reimpresed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. And if such an observation could hold in any degree of Milton, how much more powerfully must it apply to us. Let us therefore, cheerfully and gladly, follow the footsteps "of those who having fought the good fight in this life, have received a crown of glory in that which is to come—who speak to us from their tombs, but with no earthly voice, encouraging us by their example—telling us to be firm and of good cheer in this our pilgrimage—that beyond the dark portal to which we all are hurrying, there is a land of promise—and that treading in the steps where

they have trodden, and guided by the heavenly Hand which guided them, we ourselves may reach that land, and dwell with them in everlasting glory*."

* Professor Sedgwick's *Discourse on the Studies of the University*, 4th ed., p. 5.

PRAED AND HIS CHANSONS.

Vir perelegantis ingenii, et molliissima dulcedine carminum memorabilis.—*Velletus Paterculius*.

THE conclusion of the eulogy bestowed upon the old Grecian, Hesiod, *quietis otiique cupidissimus*, must, I fear, be omitted from the motto. The Carlton Club is dearer to the Member for Yarmouth than the Muses' Bower. Those days when it was pleasant with Spenser to play with

The flowers of a golden tress,

are faded and past. He cons an estimate instead of a sonnet, and prefers a gallop with Sir Francis Head through a Poor Law Commission to a Midsummer Night's Dream on Parnassus. Political life must have its charms, as it has its uses,—call it advancement if you will; but to me it seems, as it did to Shenstone while tying up his flowers at the Leasowes, only an advancement from the pit to the gallery,—a very noisy elevation! But Mr. Praed has made his choice: yet he ought to remember that one poet of rare sensibility and genius, after serving fourteen years for Rachel, found himself deprived even of Leah*.

* See Cowley's *Complaint*.

His name is to me associated with many delicious recollections. I have followed him from Eton to Trinity; from the Union to St. Stephen's; from his first onset in the *Etonian*, to his more finished efforts in Knight's *Quarterly*. I have laughed at his hits, truly "to the point," in the *London*, with the "Best Bat in the School;" and traced his retrograde movement through the Greek alphabet, from ϕ to ξ ; as the author of *Lillian*, or as Peregrine Courtney, as the Lyrist of the *Gem*, or the *New Monthly*; as the Wit of Cambridge, or of the *Morning Post*,—he has been equally lively and equally agreeable. But he is now mingling in the busy turmoil of political agitation; and I expect every day to lose him in the crowd. It is, indeed, too late to hope for a conversion; but he may at least console us by collecting his rhymes. Having taken leave of the Muses, he may present us with his lyre; and though it does not rejoice in many strings, its tone is sweet and tender. Leaving to other bards to stir the soul, as with the sound of the trumpet, he satisfies his ambition with soothing and delighting his hearers. He combines the mirth, the grace, and the fancy of Marôt. He is a natural Moore. The following poems, the remembrances of happier years, may not support this commendation; but that will be the fault of my memory, not of Mr. Praed's genius.

MADELINE.

Viens! on dirait, Madeleine,
Que le printemps, dont l'haleine
Donne aux roses leurs couleurs,
A cette nuit, pour te plaire,
Secoué sur la bruyère
Sa robe pleine de fleurs.—*Victor Hugo.*

COME forth, pretty Madeline,
Lo! the pleasant breath of May
Sweetens every field to day;
Never hath a fairer Night
Closed the dewy eyes of Light;
Come forth while the moon-beams shine
On the pale grass, Madeline.

Oh! that I were, sweet Madeline,
The happy Monk of Tombeline,
When half in hope, and half in fear,
Thy red lips breathe into his ear
Little trespasses that twine
Round thy meek heart, Madeline.

If I had, fair Madeline,
The soft eye of the evening star,
How quickly from my home afar,
Into thy chamber would I shine;
While from that snowy breast of thine
Rustles the white lawn, Madeline!

Listen, gentle Madeline!
Listen, listen, unto me;
And thy happy home shall be
Throng'd with many a vassal bold,
Sir Hubert and Sir Leoline,
And beauteous page in vest of gold,
To watch thy sweet eyes, Madeline!

And we will pitch our pleasant tent
Beneath an over-hanging tree,
Where hunter's bow was never bent,
In haunted glades of Faëry;
And I will sit by thee, and twine
Odorous garlands for the shrine
Of thy white hand, Madeline!

Or if thou lovest to recline
In darken'd chamber, faint with flowers—
What care I for sunny hours,
Or Summer light, when thou art mine,
Glowing, blushing, Madeline!

And if thou wilt, young Madeline,
For woodland chaplet thou shalt wear
A glittering crown upon thy hair,
And pearls about thy brow divine!
Sweetest, dearest, Madeline!

AN EXTEMPORE WISH.

Si j'étais la feuille que roule
 L'aile tournoyante du vent,
 Qui flotte sur l'eau qui s'écoule,
 Et qu'on suit de l'œil en rêvant :
 J'irais chez la fille du prêtre,
 Chez la blanche fille a l'œil noir,
 Qui le jour chante à sa fenêtre,
 Et joue à sa porte le soir.

Les Orientales.

I wish I were the balmy breeze
 That playeth with yon Summer rose,
 And whispers love to all the trees,
 And kisses every flower that blows.
 Oh, could I borrow those light feet,
 Farewell to bower and myrtle tree ;
 I know a garden far more sweet,
 A red rose dearer far to me.

WITCHES.

A NEW FACT IN NATURAL MAGIC. WRITTEN AFTER A
 BALL AT HUNTINGDON.

A witch! the fancy turns me pale
 As that white rose on Lady Bagot ;
 I thought that good Sir Matthew Hale
 Had sent the last witch to the fagot.

And yet they flourish still it seems!
(Oh, pray Lord Brougham prove the error!)
And vision shining through my dreams
Foretell another reign of terror;
Black tresses, like the dark locks flowing
O'er poor Sir Walter's handsome Jewess*;
And lips, like those that look so glowing,
In that sad book—*The Monk* of Lewis!

And eyes so full, and blue, and sunny,
Are gazing kindly into mine;
Bright as those of Mrs. Honey—
(A simile, mind, Madeline.)
And whispers in my ears are creeping,
Coral lips I'm sure between;
Not Spenser in his garden sleeping,
Heard sweeter from the Fairy Queen.
And footsteps drop upon the ground,
Like pleasant noise of Summer rain;
Or from a twilight bower the sound—
“Good night! but come again!”

They walk for ever by my side,
Fair witches! with their merry glances;
And just the cheeks to bloom in rhyme,
Or meet by moonlight in Romances.
They walk with me where'er I go,
On Summer mornings, Summer eves;
I open Chitty's page, and—lo!
A spirit in the leaves!

* Rebecca in *Joanhoe*.

Oh, wondrous change! oh, magic power!
What glory on the earth hath broke?
The King's-Bench blooms into a bower,
And Beauty rises out of Coke.

In vain I turn each learned page;
And ponder Sugden o'er and o'er;
Or muse upon this wicked age,
Or sport my double oaken door*.
In vain I flee from them, and shut
Myself up in some bowery vale;
You might as well attempt to cut
O'Connell from his Tail!
Oh, lay them with some magic line!
Some spell by Bishop or Clementi.
Alas! a witch at seventy-nine,
Is nothing to a witch at twenty!

* Every Cambridge man knows the luxury of a *sported* (i.e. closed) door. There is, indeed, a particular knock, not to be mistaken by a practised ear, against which it is peculiarly efficacious.

A WORD WITH PROFESSOR SEDGWICK

ON THE

STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY.

“Why, sir, a gentleman from the University stays below to speak with you.”—*Yorkshire Tragedy*, 1619.

ALL who are acquainted with Professor Sedgwick were prepared to expect from his pen an eloquent account of the studies of this University, and of the spirit in which they ought to be pursued: and all who have read his *Discourse*, know how fully these anticipations have been realized. It is hoped that the following remarks, suggested by its perusal, will be received in a spirit similar to that which has dictated them. The writer has no private interest to promote; he would gain nothing from any change, except, indeed, a sensation of pleasure at beholding the removal of what appear to him imperfections and impediments.

In the *Discourse*, the studies of the University are divided into three branches.

1st. The study of the laws of nature, comprehending all parts of inductive philosophy.

2ndly. The study of ancient literature.

3rdly. The study of ourselves, considered as individuals, and as social beings. Under this head are included ethics and metaphysics, moral and political philosophy, and some other kindred subjects of great complexity, hardly touched on in our academic system, and to be followed out in the more mature labours of after-life.

The object of a liberal education, says Mr. Whewell, is to develop the whole mental system of man, and thus to bring it into consistency with itself; to make his speculative inferences coincide with his practical convictions; to enable him to render a reason for the belief that is in him; and not to leave him in the condition of Solomon's Sluggard, who is wiser in his own conceit than seven men who can render a reason. This complete mental culture must, no doubt, consist of many elements; but it is certain that an indispensable portion is such a discipline of the reasoning power, as will enable persons to proceed with certainty and facility from fundamental principles to their consequences*. No person has a higher claim to define a liberal education than he whose vigour and capacity of understanding have so easily attained it. But that muscular energy and flexibility of mind which encircle, so to speak, every study, crushing its difficulties,

* *Thoughts on the Study of the Mathematics as a Part of a Liberal Education.*

and reducing the whole into a state suited to the mental digestion, fall to the lot of few.

A liberal education is composed of many elements, and can only be properly styled *liberal*, according as these elements are fully combined. Perhaps the most exalted idea of such an education is contained in Milton's celebrated *Tractate*. It would furnish a very excellent corrective to many a scholar of the present day, whose only memorial is in the column of a Calendar, were he to read the list of acquirements set down by this great man merely as embellishments of severer studies; and all to be learnt between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. Milton seems to agree with Coleridge in requiring "a certain measure of logic, of which so much as is useful is to be employed with all her well-concluded heads and topics, until it is time to open her contracted palm into a graceful and ornate rhetoric," taught out of Plato, Aristotle, Longinus, and, let us add, Quintilian. Milton's whole argument is directed to the *general* cultivation of the mind, and, in a minor sense, of the body also. A similar spirit pervades Cowley's plan of a Philosophical College; the object of both being so to rear and train the mind at the same time, as to lead it up to manhood in that state of healthful fulness and symmetry which constitute moral, as well as physical, beauty.

There you see Imagination hand in hand with Reason, mutually assisting and illustrating each other,—Imagination lighting the feet of Reason, and Reason restraining the riot of Imagination; an under-current of poetical feeling runs through the remarks of Milton and Cowley. Davenant called poetry the only liberal science, and in such men, nourished as it was by every stream of knowledge, it certainly deserved the name. But abandoning the wider field of inquiry, opened to us in the speculations of Milton and Cowley, let us conduct our argument into a narrower path, and examine how far the system adopted in this University fulfils our idea of a liberal education.

The number of those who pursue mathematics with a view to distinction in after-life, we apprehend to be very inconsiderable. As taught at Cambridge, the study resolves itself into a corrector and strengthener of the reasoning faculties; and the question to be discussed is, whether it be beneficial to the developement of the intellectual powers, that so large a segment of time should be devoted to the attainment of this mental discipline; whether the end corresponds with the toil; whether the fruit repays the tillage. Reading Men at the University, to employ a proverbial phrase, may be divided into two classes,—those who read for mathematical

honours, and those who read for classical ; although the latter study implies a certain acquaintance with the former. Now, in looking at the study of mathematics, pursued with reference to honours, the first thing that strikes us is its complete *exclusiveness* ; the irresistible dominion it exercises over the mind throughout the entire period given to its cultivation. Thus are nearly four years swallowed up in the endeavour to attain a constituent *part* of a liberal education. And let not the uninitiated reader suppose that hard mathematical reading—and such reading can alone answer the object proposed—admits of application to other acquirements. This intellectual Despotism suffers no brother near its throne.

The art of reasoning we take to consist in the clear enunciation and arrangement of our thoughts ; in which every link attaches to the preceding, and so attaches, that no alteration in its position could improve the strength or beauty of the chain. None will deny this accuracy of the mental eye in adapting and fitting all the component parts of an argument, so that it may become equally elegant to the sight, and equally firm in the grasp, to be a very valuable accomplishment. But it must be apparent to all, that a discipline professing to act in this manner upon the mind, ought to be continually supplied with matter to

work upon; that this plastic power, which is to give coherency and symmetry to our thoughts, should have elements susceptible of its moulding influence. And in this light was the study regarded by our elder scholars; we have seen Fuller calling it the ballast of the vessel, carefully distinguishing it from the freight. But under the exclusive and all-engrossing system of mathematical reading, this machinery only works in theory; no complicated questions in philosophy are submitted to its operation; no entangled train of metaphysical subtilties are unravelled by it; for these solutions would gain no marks in the Senate-House, and we are assuming these studies to be followed, as they usually are, with a view to the Tripos List. How then stands the case with the *mere* mathematician? Why, that with reference to knowledge, as comprised in a liberal education, he has the power of combining, with nothing to combine; the plan of a building, without the materials; or, to wind up the whole in a saying previously quoted from Butler, he can reckon up any sum of money, but has none.

He leaves the University, therefore, with only one branch of a liberal education; it may be urged in extenuation, that the foundation for knowledge is firmly laid, that his mind is familiar with habits of analysis, that he carries with him a very beautiful

apparatus to assist his efforts in every other pursuit. But how few, after they leave these walls, can command their own time sufficiently to follow any new course of study, except in connexion with their future profession. Those hours in which Truth dawns upon us in the clear air of delightful studies glide away, very rarely to return. The little comforts of many a lowly home have been abridged, many an hour stolen from slumber, many a heavy eye and aching head turned upon the pillow, to furnish a child with the funds for his academic education. In proportion, then, to the severity of these privations will be the desire of the individual to lighten the burden the moment he is able. He is glad to employ what he has acquired without attempting to increase the store. In numerous instances, indeed, the power and the inclination are wanting; for the exhaustion always keeps pace with the stimulant; and the very nerves of the understanding lose the tone and force of health, by the over-exertion and straining of this early race. These cases are too common to be particularized. But there is another ill-consequence to be mentioned, not so much flowing from the Science itself, as from the temper in which it is cultivated; we mean a disregard, often deepening into contempt, towards other pursuits. This assertion admits of ample proof.

The celebrated Barrow, who in one place calls poetry ingenious nonsense, in a letter to Skinner, presumed to speak of the author of *Paradise Lost* as "one Milton." Sir Isaac Newton is related to have said of the same work: "This is a fine poem, but what does it prove?" A question so marvelously weak that it seems almost to refute the anecdote. We have read of a lawyer who threw away a celebrated novel, because the first chapter contained a bad will; and of a Geometrician, whose sole pleasure in the *Æneid* consisted in tracing the voyage of Æneas. Sir Edward Coke, in the copy of the *Novum Organum* now in the library at Holkham, has written with his own hand the following:—

Auctori consilium,
Instaurare paras veterum documenta sophisma,
Instaura leges, justitiamque prius.

Locke affords another specimen of a mind contracted by its prevailing occupation; this partial blindness of the perception may be the inevitable result of the absorption of the faculties in one great object: yet, while we pardon it in such men as Barrow and Newton, we cannot but observe something of a *maimed* appearance in their intellect. Giants though they be, they are giants with a single eye. But this grace cannot be extended to

that large company of *technical* mathematicians, who are conversant with the letter but not with the spirit.

Hitherto our remarks have been confined to the study of mathematics, viewed only in relation to intellectual discipline. We are now to speak of it in the wider signification of a moral regulator, not only "as favourable to self-control," but giving to the mind a power of concentration, "that saves it from the languor and misery arising from vacuity of thought." Undoubtedly to a mind, like Professor Sedgwick's, stored with knowledge and enriched by reflection, such studies, tending to harmonize the materials of thought, must be very advantageous; but all these arguments seem to assume the existence of other acquirements, the collection of other treasures; in the great majority of instances, these acquirements do *not* exist; these treasures are *not* collected.

If, on the other hand, it be asserted that mathematics, whether in higher or lower subjects, suffices of itself, by employing the mind, to protect it from vacuity of thought, then we apprehend such an ascription of power to be most perfectly erroneous. An astronomer, or an engineer, engaged during the day in practical applications of the sciences, will, of course, come within the limits of the proposition; for they escape from vacuity of thought by their

plans and calculations, as a lawyer does by his briefs. Yet even in such practised heads as these weariness will arise, and the mind, fatigued by its tension, will long to be unbent. For of all the pursuits of human ingenuity, that of mathematics demands the intensest application. It is related of one well known in the records of science, that after the exhaustion of some minute astronomical experiments, he has been driven to count the drops of rain at the window, or watch the race of two flies along the glass, in order that by an utter repose of thought the intellect might recover its elasticity. These remarks bear chiefly on those in whom mathematics may be regarded as a profession; Professor Sedgwick, however, makes no such restriction; but gives to it an universal application. But the most ardent admirer of mechanical problems will tire at last; he cannot always be calculating the resistance of our feet to the ground, or the rapidity of descent down an inclined plane, or the momentum of a bullet passing through a sheet of paper. Every one knows, who knows anything of the human mind, that as the subject, on which it leans, declines in interest, vacuity and restlessness of thought supervene; and these enemies of intellectual dignity are only to be repelled by a variety of resources. These evil spirits are not to be laid by a single tune.

Having endeavoured to show that in this exclusive application to mathematical learning, the end is inadequate to the labour; that a single element of knowledge is erected into a system; that its influence upon the understanding depends upon general cultivation, to which, by its very exclusiveness, this study is most unfavourable; that, consequently, in a large majority of cases, the intellectual education, properly so called, remains to begin after the termination of academical residence,—we shall now make one or two very brief remarks upon the influence of mathematics upon the health and energies of the student; and we shall take for our authority one whom the most ardent supporters of the present system will not refuse to accept,—one who not only obtained the highest scientific honours of the University, but who was throughout his life remarkable for the masculine vigour, and the logical acuteness of his faculties. We shall take Archdeacon Paley. “You may do anything with young men,” were his words to a friend at Carlisle, “by encouragements, by prizes, by honours, and distinctions. See what is done at Cambridge. But there the stimulus is too strong, two or three heads are cracked by it every year. Some of them go mad; others are reduced to such a state of debility, both of mind and body, that they are unfit for anything during the rest of their lives. I always coun-

selling the admixture of the study of natural philosophy, of classics and literature, and that University honours should be accorded to all."

We entreat the reader to pause upon this testimony; to weigh deliberately the terrible truths it announces. For it relates not to a particular period, nor arises out of a rare combination of unfortunate circumstances; it is more true of Cambridge now, than it was then; because the increase of the University, by adding to the number of competitors, has proportionably heightened the difficulties of competition. If heads were cracked in Paley's time, heads are cracked now; if men were reduced, in that day, to such a state of bodily and mental debility as to unfit them for anything during the remainder of their lives; they are reduced so still. For there is no axiom more infallibly certain in geometry than that from like causes like results will flow. Our object is not to indulge in declamation, but temperately and respectfully to point out the magnitude of the evil. It rests with those who have the power to mitigate or remove it.

We pass on, in the next place, to notice two instances of what may be called omission, namely, the institution of a Classical and a Theological Tripos, distinct from, and entirely unconnected with, any other examination. It does appear a hardship, and as such we have frequently heard it

complained of, that while the path to mathematical honours lies perfectly open and uninterrupted, the candidate for classical distinction has to force his way to the classical Tripos through the mathematical; and this seems an unfair restriction, both directly and relatively: *directly*—because every study, worthy of diligent cultivation, ought to rest upon its own merits, and possess its own independent rewards; *relatively*—because the mathematical student has no claim to so partial an exemption. If the one is to be driven into this mental discipline of his thoughts; the acquisition of thoughts to discipline ought to be required with no less pertinacity from the other. Nor will it invalidate the argument to adduce the very rare examples of men who have carried off the highest prizes in classics and mathematics simultaneously. No rule is to be overthrown by its exceptions.

The institution of a Theological Tripos may be advocated upon higher grounds. A very great proportion of the younger members of the University are destined for the service of the Church, and to this object of supreme importance it strikes the reflecting mind that their studies should be principally directed. But strictly speaking, there is no provision whatever for the peculiar instruction of theological students; the College Lectures upon the New Testament being addressed to the members.

generally. We are aware that a certificate from the Norrisian Professor, of an attendance upon twenty lectures in one term, is required of every Divinity Student; but the circumstance of there being no preparatory examination destroys any beneficial result from this regulation. It may be asked, how is the future minister of the Gospel meanwhile employing himself? The answer is plain,—supposing him to be a candidate for honours, he is necessarily engaged in the prosecution of those studies which promise to lead him to the goal. His energies are therefore diverted into an entirely different channel. It is emphatically true of mathematics, pursued with reference to the Senate House, that they do not admit of service to two masters. There may be minds and constitutions of sufficient strength to allow of other acquirements, but the union is very seldom seen. Let it then be granted that the student gains the object of his ambition, and establishes a high character for scientific or classical talent; for they are both obnoxious, though in unequal degrees, to the same objection. We say in unequal degrees, because an intimacy with the models of Greek and Roman eloquence and poetry, by familiarizing the taste with elegance and beauty, may afford great assistance to a clergyman in his office of instructor. Granting then, we repeat, that so far his course has been triumphant and honourable,—how does he

stand with reference to the sacred functions he is about to take upon him.

The average age at which a degree is ordinarily obtained, varies from twenty-two or three to twenty-four or five. In many cases ordination is applied for within a year after the degree has been conferred ; within which period none but an intellect of very rare perseverance and power can possibly penetrate many steps into theology ; of all studies demanding the most patient and unwearied attention, if approached in a becoming spirit.

The evils of this state of things are not hypothetical. Many years have not elapsed, since an individual, distinguished in this University for his extensive proficiency in mathematical knowledge, was refused ordination, upon the ground of imperfect acquaintance with the great truths of his religion. He referred, with pardonable confidence, to his character at the University, and the degree that had rewarded his exertions. "I do not doubt your talents or your learning," was the reply of the excellent Prelate to whom we allude ; "but your duty in the church will be to preach Christ crucified, and with Him you appear to be very imperfectly acquainted." We give the purport of the observation without professing literal accuracy. Now, it is morally impossible that such a circumstance as this could have occurred, had a Theo-

logical Tripos existed; for the industry and talent which reaped distinction from one study, would have reaped it from another. This subject has been urged upon the attention of the senate in a recent pamphlet, and seems to call for earnest and early attention; that its effect upon the rising ministry would be highly beneficial, cannot admit of a question. Every step taken in *this* study would be a step to positive and future usefulness. Every honour attained *here* would be permanent; the fame of a distinguished place in a Theological Tripos, as testifying the extent of his researches into sacred literature, would follow the student to his parish. His academical residence would then be only a season devoted to arming himself for the battle; and the Soldier of the Cross would issue forth, not having to forge his weapons and construct his armoury, but prepared for the combat, and furnished with the means of victory. In such a course of study the energies would be called into action; for he would feel that he was not *cramming* up a subject for a particular occasion; but fitting himself for a profession, at once the noblest, and the most important into which a candidate can be received. He would feel, in short, while exploring the works of a hundred illustrious Divines, that where his treasure is, there his heart should be also.

In taking leave of the subject, we may express our regret that Professor Sedgwick's excellent remarks upon Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, were not extended to his *Evidences*. It has often struck us very forcibly, that a new edition of that work, prepared under the superintendence of the University, and embodying in a condensed form, other facts, adduced by later writers, would be highly advantageous to the cause of sound religion. No person can entertain a higher admiration of what has been justly called, his homely strength and clearness of style, and his unrivalled skill in stating and following out his argument. In these qualities he is unsurpassed by any modern theologians. With so many rare recommendations, some imperfections are bound up. The chief of these, is the absence of any chapter upon the divinity of our Saviour; the very corner-stone of the whole structure. When this omission was mentioned to Paley, he is reported to have said, that it did not fall within his plan to enter upon contested doctrines. But the answer, if genuine, is very illogical; for the entire book must be regarded as a triumphant refutation of controverted doctrines—the miracles of our Saviour, his resurrection, his prophetic declarations—are not these all disputed points—and disputed too with all the bitterness of polemical and deistical animosity. Yet Paley has

encountered them all. However, this portion of the Evidences is wanting; and I suppose no reasonable doubt can be entertained respecting the propriety of its addition. For, let it be remembered, that upon this fact hangs the whole history of our religion; and in direct proportion to the overwhelming importance of the argument, is the necessity of its lucid statement. It will also have occurred to every careful reader of the Evidences, that in some places, the arguments are not so forcible as they might have been; contented with driving the enemy upon his knee, he does not always wrench the sword out of his hand. An instance of this kind, though not the strongest that might be selected, is met with in the examination of Vespasian's cures of two men at Alexandria, as narrated by Tacitus. What he does say, is said admirably; but he might have said more. At this time, Vespasian was watching at Alexandria for the overthrow of the power of Vitellius, to seize at once upon the empire. At such a juncture, therefore, it was particularly desirable to increase in every way his reputation and influence; and there was no method by which the favour and a certain inclination of the gods towards him *, could be so

* Per eos menses, quibus Vespasianus Alexandriæ statos æstivis flatibus dies, et certa maris opperiebatur, multa miracula evenere, quis cœli favor, et quædam in Vespasianum inclinatio numinum ostenderetur.—*Historiarum*, lib. iv., c. 81.

signally displayed, as by the working of miracles, among a people whom the historian describes as given before all others to superstition.

And in the following chapter, Tacitus confirms the deception by the subsequent conduct of Vespasian. Hence, he says, referring to his alleged cures, Vespasian was actuated by a stronger desire to enter the sacred place, (the temple of Serapis,) that he might consult the Deity upon the affairs of the empire. Having ordered all persons to be driven away from the temple, he entered alone, and after paying his devotions to the God, on looking behind him, he saw one of the chief men among the Egyptians, by name Basilides, who was known to be confined by sickness, at a place many days' journey from Alexandria. He inquires of the priests whether they had seen this person enter the temple; and of others, if they had met him in the streets. At length, he discovers, that at the moment of his appearance, he was eighty miles off. Then he interpreted it to be a divine vision, and from the name of the man, (Basilides, from *Βασίλειος*,) drew an augury of the success of his enterprise*.

* *Altior inde Vespasiano cupido adeundi sacram sedem, ut super rebus imperii consuleret. "Archeri templo cunctos" jubet: atque ingressus intentusque numini, respexit pone tergum e primoribus Ægyptiorum nomine Basilidem: quem procul Alexandria plurium dierum itinere, et ægro corpore detineri*

haud ignorabat. Percunctatur Sacerdotes; num illo die Basilides templum inisset. Percunctatur obvios num in urbe visus sit? Denique missis equitibus, explorat, illo temporis momento octoginta millibus passuum abfuisse. Tunc divinam speciem, et vim responsi ex nomine Basilidis interpretatus est. —*Historiarum*, lib. iv., c. 82. See also Keith on the *Prophecies*, and *Quarterly Review*, No. CV.

NOTES.

Page 19.—The character of Bolingbroke is, it will be seen, somewhat exaggerated.

Page 35.—Dr. Southey, whose admiration of Sydney is well known, thus writes concerning him to Sir Egerton Brydges:—

“From very early boyhood, when I first read the *Arcadia* in Mrs. Stanley’s modernization of it, Sydney took possession of my imagination. Not that I liked the book the better just in proportion as she had worsened it; for his own language would have presented nothing strange or difficult to me, who had read Shakspeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher, as soon as I could understand enough of them to follow the story of their plays: but she had thrown away the pastoral parts and the miserable pieces of metre with which those parts are encumbered, and therefore I had nothing to interrupt my enjoyment of the romance. Spenser afterwards increased my veneration for Sydney; and Penshurst, when I first saw it (in 1791), was the holiest ground I had ever visited.

“Forty years have not abated my love and veneration for Sydney. I do not remember any character more nearly without reproach. His prose is full of poetry,

and there are very fine passages among his poems—distinguishing them from his metres in which there is scarcely a redeeming line, thought, or expression.”

Has the Laureate given up his intended memoir of Sydney ?

Page 57.—The words of Erasmus are:—*Extruxit ad Flumen Thamysin haud procul ab urbe Londino, prætorium nec sordidum, nec ad invidiam usque magnificum, commodum tamen; illic agit cum intimo sodalitis, uxore filio et nuru, tribus filiabus, et totidem generis, una cum nepotibus jam undecim, &c.*

Cardinal Wolsey, whose penetration, at least, has never been questioned, is reported to have declared that there was no person so fit to succeed him as Sir Thomas More.

Page 126.—See some articles on the Orientalisms of the Greek writers in the *Asiatic Journal*.

Page 164.—“In the days of Chaucer and Gower,” says Coleridge, “our language might be compared to a wilderness of vocal reeds, from which the favourites only of Pan or Apollo could construct even the rude *Syrinx*; and from this the *constructors* alone could elicit strains of music.” See also a passage upon Chaucer’s versification in the *Table-Talk*.

Page 198.—Let me add here three stanzas from this delightful poem. The first relates to the sanguine hopes of youthful love.

She thinks of Eden-life, and no rough wind,
In their pacific sea shall wrinkles make :
That still her lowliness shall keep him kind,
Her cares keep him asleep, her voice awake.

SHAME.

He taught them shame, the sudden sense of ill ;
Shame, Nature's hasty Conscience, which forbids
Weak inclination ere it grow to will,
And stays rash will, before it grow to deeds.

MUSIC.

Toss'd cymbals (which the sullen Jews admir'd)
Were figured here, with all of ancient choice
That joy did ere invent, or breath inspir'd,
Or flying fingers touch'd into a voice.

THE END.



